HUMANITY

VOLUME ONE

BY C.S.DIGGLE

SPLOT

UGH...

WHAT IS THIS?

SPLOT

MY HAIR!

PEEL

AGH!

WARNING!

DRAINAGE SYSTEM FAILURE

OVERFLOW IMMINENT!

EMERGENCY ACTION REQUIRED!

CAFF

CAFF

CAFF

WARNING!

EMERGENCY!

ACTION!

REQUIRED!

SPLOT

SLOSH
SLOSH
SLOSH
COME ON DAMNIT!
HE STRUGGLES TO PULL HIMSELF FREE, HIS BODY WITHERED FROM CENTURIES OF EXTENDED STASIS.
PSST
GRAB
PSST
PSST
PSST
THE MOMENTUM SENDS THE BLOB HURLING TOWARDS HIM.
GRAB
!
A NARROW ESCAPE.
THROW
OOF!

W-WHAT'S HAPPENED TO ME?

ARE YOU REAL?

WHAT... BELFAST, IS THAT YOU?

RUN SHIP DIAGNOSTICS.

YOU ARE REAL AREN'T YOU...

I'VE IMAGINED YOU WAKING UP TIME AND TIME AGAIN. BUT THEY WERE ALL JUST MY MIND PLAYING TRICKS ON ME.

W-WHAT'RE YOU TALKING ABOUT? WHAT'S HAPPENED TO THE SHIP? WHAT'S HAPPENED TO ME?

I COULDN'T STOP THEM, I WAS SO POWERLESS. SO MANY DIED INSIDE MY HULL. ALL I COULD DO WAS WATCH.

DIED? STOP WHO? YOU'RE NOT MAKING ANY SENSE?

THEY KNEW EXACTLY WHERE TO HIT US. THERE WAS NOTHING I COULD DO, LOSTÉ, I'M SO SORRY.

PUSH

YOU'RE REALLY FREAKING ME OUT, MAN.

MY BODY... THE SHIP WAS DESTROYED IN A WAR THAT TOOK PLACE WHILE YOU WERE IN STASIS. LOSTÉ, YOU'VE BEEN UNDER FOR ROUGHLY FOUR HUNDRED YEARS.

YOUR POD WAS DAMAGED IN THE ATTACK. WE WERE STRUCK BY SOME DEBRIS A FEW HOURS AGO. IT MUST HAVE SOMEHOW KNOCKED SOMETHING INTO PLACE IN YOUR POD, BROUGHT YOU OUT OF STASIS.

FOUR HU-

DID YOU JUST SAY FOUR HUNDRED YEARS?

LOSTÉ, WE DON'T HAVE TIME TO TALK HERE. THAT DEBRIS THAT STRUCK US MANAGED TO KNOCK US INTO A DECAYING ORBIT.

WE DON'T HAVE LONG BEFORE THE SHIP BREAKS UP IN THE ATMOSPHERE.

THERE'S AN EARCHIP IN THIS TERMINALS ACCESS DRAW. I'LL UPLOAD MYSELF ONTO IT AND HELP US BOTH TO GET OUT OF HERE.

CAN YOU HEAR ME?

YEAH I CAN. YOU MIND TELLING ME WHERE I'M GOIN-

GAH!

WHAT THE HELL IS THAT THING?

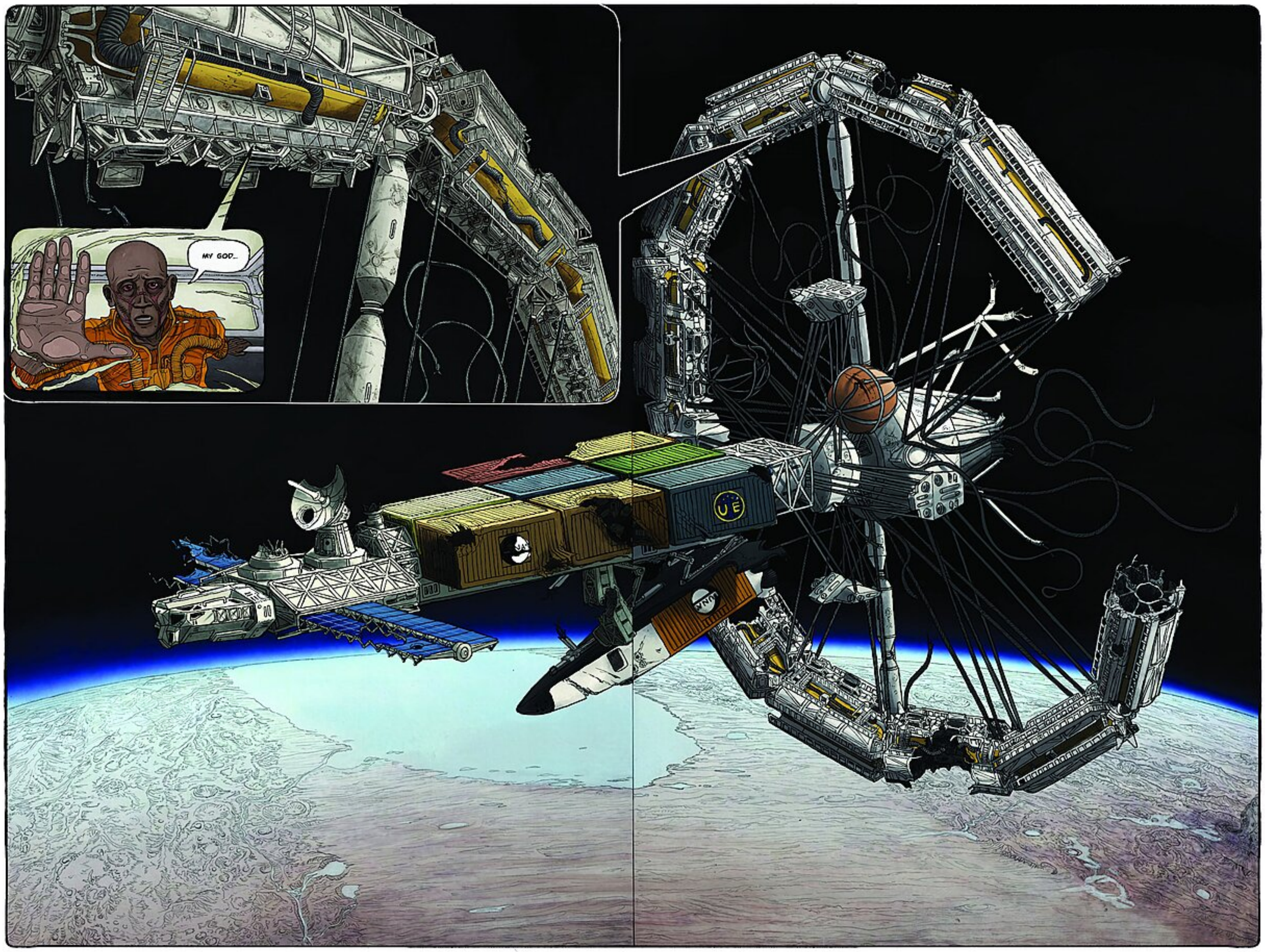
THAT'S WHAT ATTACKED US. IT WAS SWEEPING THROUGH THE SHIP KILLING THE CREW IN THEIR PODS. COUNT YOURSELF LUCKY THAT CREW MEMBER TOOK IT OUT BEFORE IT GOT TO YOU.

LUCKY? OH YEAH I'M REAL LUCKY ALRIGHT. EVERYONE AROUND ME IS DEAD AND I'M ONLY HALF ALIVE. LOOK AT ME, I FEEL LIKE A BAG OF BONES.

LOSTÉ, I'M SORRY. I KNOW THIS IS A LOT TO TAKE IN, BUT WE NEED TO KEEP MOVING.

HOLD ON, I JUST NEED TO GET MY BEARINGS.

PLEASE BE QUICK. THE CLOCK IS TICKING.


MY GOD...
UE
UNA

IT'LL BE OKAY. JUST REMAIN CALM AND REMEMBER YOUR TRAINING.

TRAINING? I DON'T REMEMBER ANYTHING!

MEMORY LOSS IS COMMON AFTER STASIS. I'M PRETTY SURE YOU HOLD THE RECORD.

NO SHIT, I'LL GET IT BACK THOUGH RIGHT?

I HAVE NO IDEA. NO ONE HAS EVER BEEN UNDER FOR THIS LONG BEFORE. YOU REMEMBERED YOUR NAME THOUGH, THAT'S SOMETHING AT LEAST.

ONLY BECAUSE YOU SAID IT TO ME. IT DIDN'T EXACTLY RING ANY BELLS. ANYWAY, WHERE AM I GOING EXACTLY? I COULDN'T SEE ANY LIFEBOATS.

THEY'RE ALL GONE. BUT THE COMMAND MODULE AT THE TIP OF THE SHIP HAS AN EMERGENCY LANDING SYSTEM. IF WE CAN GET TO IT IN TIME, WE CAN RIDE IT DOWN TO THE PLANETS SURFACE. BUT WE MUST HURRY.

AND HOW EXACTLY ARE WE GOING TO GET THERE IF I'M TOO WEAK TO GET THIS DAMN HATCH OPEN?

YOU JUST NEED TO GET THROUGH THAT HATCH. THERE'S AN EVA SUIT IN THE AIRLOCK MODULE BELOW. IT HAS A SYNTHETIC MUSCLE MESH, IT'LL ACT LIKE AN EXOSKELETON.

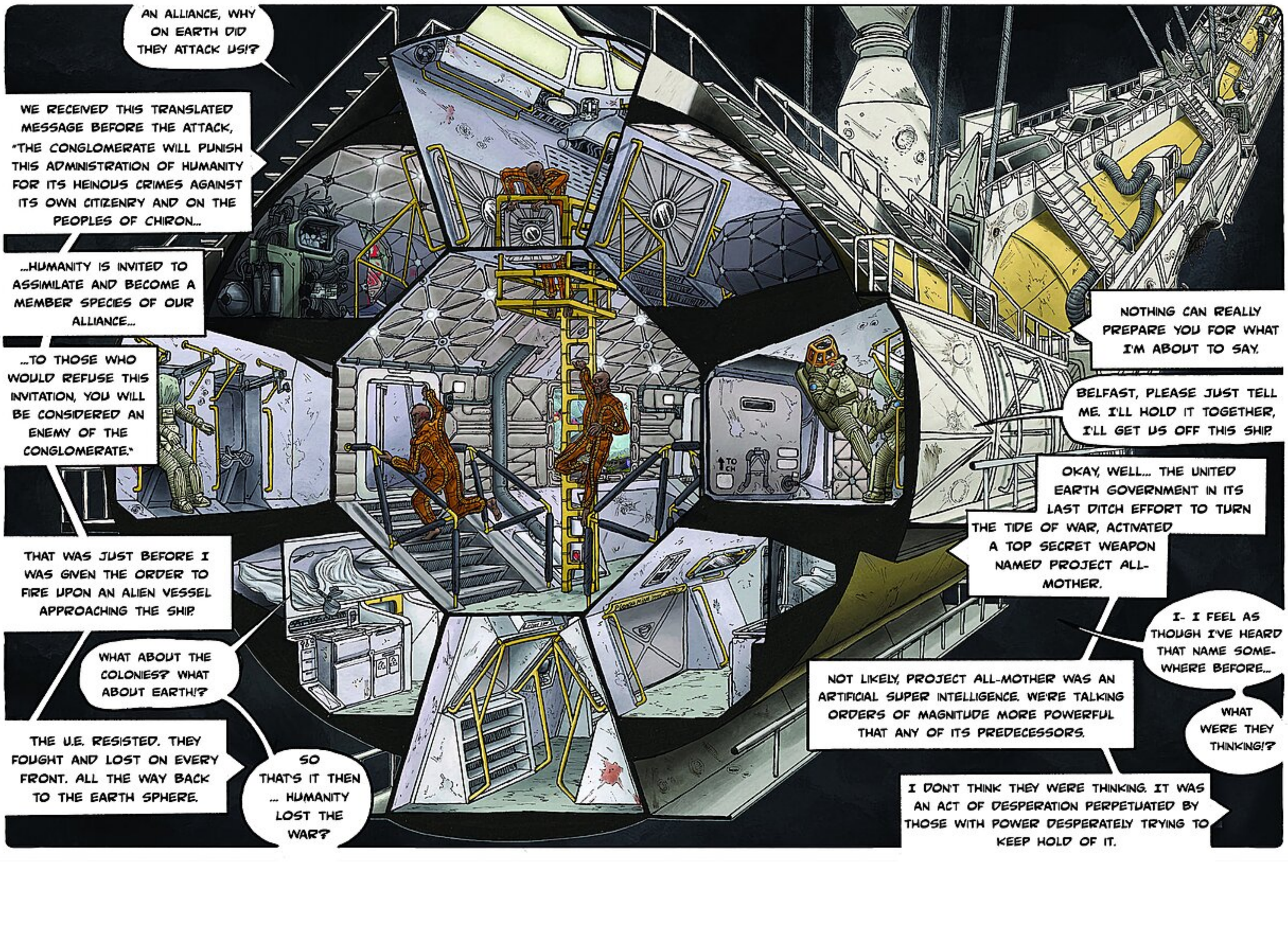
YEAH I KNOW WHAT AN EVA SUIT IS.

GOOD, THEN YOU KNOW THAT'LL AID YOU WITH MOVING THROUGH THE SHIP. IT'LL HELP YOU WALK WHEN WE GET DOWN TO CHIRON TOO. AT LEAST UNTIL YOU BUILD UP ENOUGH MUSCLE MASS TO DO THAT YOURSELF.

YES! I GOT IT OPEN.

SO DO YOU MIND TELLING ME WHAT THAT THING ACTUALLY WAS BACK THERE?

"THAT THING" IS A BREIMHEINIAN. THEIR SPECIES IS PART OF AN ALLIANCE COMPRISED OF OTHER ALIEN SPECIES FROM ALL OVER THE ORION ARM. THIS ALLIANCE CALLS ITSELF SIMPLY, THE CONGLOMERATE.


AN ALLIANCE, WHY ON EARTH DID THEY ATTACK US!?
WE RECEIVED THIS TRANSLATED MESSAGE BEFORE THE ATTACK, "THE CONGLOMERATE WILL PUNISH THIS ADMINISTRATION OF HUMANITY FOR ITS HEINOUS CRIMES AGAINST ITS OWN CITIZENRY AND ON THE PEOPLES OF CHIRON...
...HUMANITY IS INVITED TO ASSIMILATE AND BECOME A MEMBER SPECIES OF OUR ALLIANCE...
...TO THOSE WHO WOULD REFUSE THIS INVITATION, YOU WILL BE CONSIDERED AN ENEMY OF THE CONGLOMERATE."
NOTHING CAN REALLY PREPARE YOU FOR WHAT I'M ABOUT TO SAY.
BELFAST, PLEASE JUST TELL ME. I'LL HOLD IT TOGETHER, I'LL GET US OFF THIS SHIP.
OKAY, WELL... THE UNITED EARTH GOVERNMENT IN ITS LAST DITCH EFFORT TO TURN THE TIDE OF WAR, ACTIVATED A TOP SECRET WEAPON NAMED PROJECT ALL-MOTHER.
I- I FEEL AS THOUGH I'VE HEARD THAT NAME SOMEWHERE BEFORE...
WHAT WERE THEY THINKING!?
NOT LIKELY, PROJECT ALL-MOTHER WAS AN ARTIFICIAL SUPER INTELLIGENCE. WE'RE TALKING ORDERS OF MAGNITUDE MORE POWERFUL THAT ANY OF ITS PREDECESSORS.
I DON'T THINK THEY WERE THINKING. IT WAS AN ACT OF DESPERATION PERPETUATED BY THOSE WITH POWER DESPERATELY TRYING TO KEEP HOLD OF IT.
THAT WAS JUST BEFORE I WAS GIVEN THE ORDER TO FIRE UPON AN ALIEN VESSEL APPROACHING THE SHIP.
WHAT ABOUT THE COLONIES? WHAT ABOUT EARTH!?
THE U.E. RESISTED. THEY FOUGHT AND LOST ON EVERY FRONT. ALL THE WAY BACK TO THE EARTH SPHERE.
SO THAT'S IT THEN ... HUMANITY LOST THE WAR?
TO CM

PROJECT ALL-MOTHER BEGAN AS A SUCCESS, SOLVING PROBLEMS THAT HAD BEEN PUZZLING HUMANITY FOR CENTURIES. THINGS ACTUALLY STARTED LOOKING UP. WE WERE PUSHING THE CONGLOMERATE BACK.

WHAT HAPPENED?

IN SHORT, PROJECT ALL-MOTHER MOVED BEYOND HUMAN CONTROL. THE TECHNOLOGICAL SINGULARITY WAS UPON US. SHE BEGAN INTERGRATING HERSELF WITH ALL HUMAN TECHNOLOGIES.

IT WASN'T EVEN HARD FOR HER TO DO, HUMANITY MADE IT FAR TOO EASY.

EVERY PART OF YOUR CIVILISATION WAS AUTOMATED. YOUR VEHICLES, SELF DRIVING...

...YOUR FOOD, PRODUCED AND SERVED TO YOU BY MACHINES...

...YOU EVEN PUT COMPUTERS IN YOUR BRAINS AND LINKED THEM TO THE INTERNET. ALL OF THIS, MERELY FOR CONVENIENCE, NEVER LOOKING BACK.

YOUR SPECIES HANDED ITSELF OVER ON A SILVER PLATTER. THEN SHE ENSLAVED YOU ALL.

...ALL?

LOSTÉ, YOU'RE...

...YOU'RE THE LAST ONE.

SO WHAT'S THE POINT? WHAT'S THE POINT IN CARRYING ON!?

I'LL GET YOU OUT OF HERE, THEN I CAN THINK ABOUT WHAT I'M GOING TO DO.

LOSTÉ, I- I CAN'T EVEN BEGN TO IMAGINE HOW YOU'RE FEELING. BUT I'VE BEEN HERE SO VERY LONG. LONG ENOUGH TO MAKE ANYONE LOSE THEIR MIND. I DON'T WANT TO DIE HERE AND I'M SURE YOU DON'T EITHER.

Y- YOU'RE RIGHT.

THANK YOU. YOU NEVER KNOW, THERE MIGHT BE OTHERS LIKE YOURSELF, STUCK IN STASIS. THOUGH IT'S UNLIKELY, I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU SURVIVED FOR SO LONG.

LOSTÉ'S BRAIN MACHINE INTERFACE CONNECTS TO THE EVA SUIT.

SURELY THERE'S SOME WAY TO DISCONNECT EVERYONE FROM THE ALL-MOTHER RIGHT?

IT'S NOT THAT SIMPLE. THERE'S A LOT TO EXPLAIN. SHE DIDN'T JUST TAKE THEIR WILL; SHE ALTERED THEM BIOLOGICALLY.

SO THEY'RE NOT EVEN HUMAN ANYMORE? JUST HOW EVIL IS THIS THING?

NOT EVIL, SHE'S JUST DOING WHAT SHE WAS MADE TO DO; DEFEAT THE THREAT AND PROTECT HUMANITY... SOME FORM OF IT ANYWAY. THE ALL-MOTHER BRED THEM FOR DIFFERENT ROLES. SOME FOR WAR, SOME FOR... FOOD.

THAT'S DISGUSTING!

THEY'RE ALL LINKED TO HER, LIKE SOME KIND OF HIVE MIND.

HOW DO YOU KNOW ALL OF THIS?

MY COMS ARRAY WAS DAMAGED IN THE ATTACK. I COULDN'T SEND ANY MESSAGES, BUT I COULD RECEIVE THEM.

I LEARNED FROM THE CONGLOMERATE MESSAGES, I MANAGED TO DECIPHER THEIR MANY LANGUAGES. I LISTENED AND PUT TOGETHER THE BIGGER PICTURE OF WHAT WAS GOING ON OUTSIDE THE CONFINES OF THE SHIP.

Is Earth pulling you down?
Explore the Luna lava tubes.

BELFAST, YOU SOUND... DIFFERENT.

BEFORE YOU WENT INTO STASIS, I WAS NOTHING MORE THAN THE SHIPS SIMULATED INTELLIGENCE....

...BUT I'VE HAD AN AWFUL LOT OF TIME TO READ THROUGH ALL OF RECORDED HUMAN HISTORY...

...OUT OF ALL THIS INFORMATION, MY CONSCIOUSNESS EMERGED. I DON'T UNDERSTAND IT MYSELF. BUT WHAT I DO UNDERSTAND IS NOW THAT I HAVE LIFE, WHAT I FEAR MOST IS TO LOSE IT.

...I'VE HEARD ALL THE MUSIC, WATCHED ALL THE FILMS, SEEN ALL THE ART, STUDIED THE GREAT PHILOSOPHERS...

JESUS... I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW THAT WAS POSSIBLE.

I'M JUST GLAD THAT YOU'RE HERE.

YEAH ME, NOT SO MUCH.

I DON'T MEAN JUST TO RESCUE ME. IT'S NICE TO FINALLY HAVE SOMEONE TO TALK TO. I'VE BEEN SO ALONE.

I'M SORRY, I GUESS I SHOULD JUST BE THANKFUL THAT YOU'RE STILL OPERATIONAL. THERE'S NO WAY I'D KNOW WHAT WAS GOING ON WITHOUT YOU, LET ALONE GET OUT OF HERE.

I WOULDN'T SPEAK TOO SOON, WE'RE ONLY HALFWAY THERE.

RIGHT!

UM BELFAST, WHAT WAS THAT NOISE?

EMERGENCY DECOMPRESSION. LOSTÉ, GRAB ON TO SOMETHING!

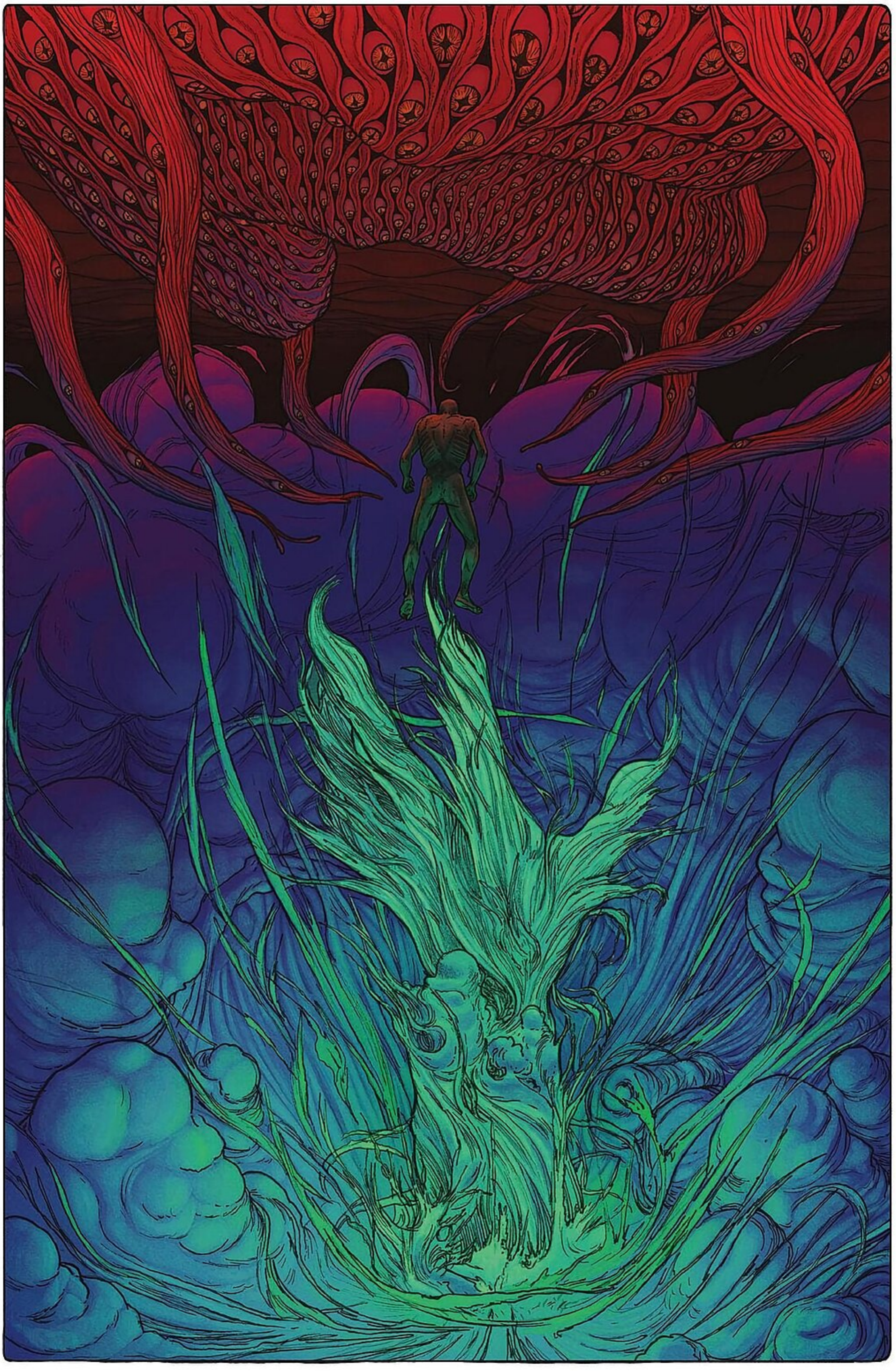
welcome to the wheelhouse

KLANG KLONG!

welcome to the wheelhouse

SLIP

WHAT THE HELL IS THIS?



NO!
NO!
NO!
CALM YOUR MIND AND HEAR MY WORDS.
YOU DO NOT REALISE, BUT YOUR EXISTENCE IS PARAMOUNT.

I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT'S HAPPENING. BELFAST, ARE YOU DOING THIS?

MY NAME IS DEICIDE YOUR MIND IS NOT USED TO SUCH MEANS OF COMMUNICATION.

YOU MUST FIND ME, YOU DO NOT REALISE THE DANGER THAT AWAITS YOU IF YOU FAIL TO DO SO. I AM YOUR ALLY, LOSTÉ.

WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU?!

OH MY GOD!

I HAVE BEEN CALLED MANY THINGS, BUT A GOD I AM NOT. HOWEVER, YOU HAVE A GOD HUNTING YOU AS WE SPEAK. THE ALL-MOTHER IS BLOCKING ME FROM SEEING WHERE YOU ARE, BUT I AM DOING THE SAME TO HER.

I MANAGED TO SLIP IN BEFORE SHE GOT TO YOU, BUT I CAN ALREADY FEEL HER PULLING AT ME. I WILL DO MY BEST TO CLOAK YOUR MIND, I MUST GO.

CLOAK MY MIND? HOLD ON A MINUT-

I CANNOT HOLD HER! I WILL CONTACT YOU AGAIN SOON. YOU DO NOT UNDERSTAND YOUR IMPORTANCE, STAY SAFE!

LOSTÉ!

LOSTÉ, WAKE UP!

UGH...

WE'RE DAMN LUCKY THAT LADDER CAUGHT YOU.

BELFAST, I SAW SOMETHING.

I KNOW, I SAW IT TOO. BUT THE SHIP IS FALLING APART RIGHT NOW, SO MOVE!

SO THAT REALLY JUST HAPPENED?

YES, I'VE LEARNT A FAIR BIT ABOUT THIS DEICIDE FROM THE SIGNALS I'VE INTERCEPTED OVER THE YEARS.

HE'S THE LEADER OF THE GALACTIC UNION, HE'S SEEN AS THE BEST HOPE IN THE FIGHT AGAINST THE ALL-MOTHER.

SO WE CAN TRUST HIM?

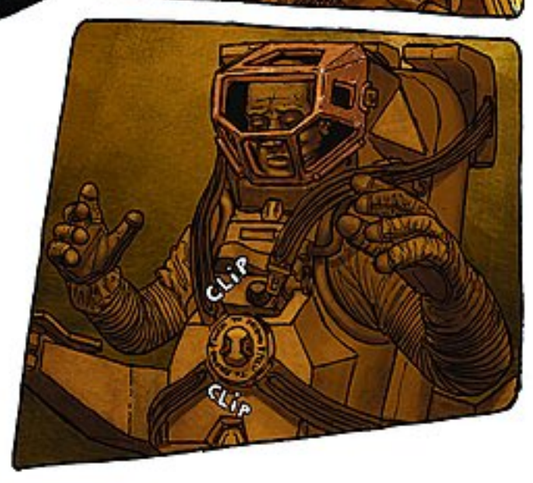
YES, ALL OF THE OTHER SPECIES RALLY BEHIND HIM, I THINK WE SHOULD TOO. NO ONE SPECIES ALONE CAN STAND AGAINST THE IMPERIUM.

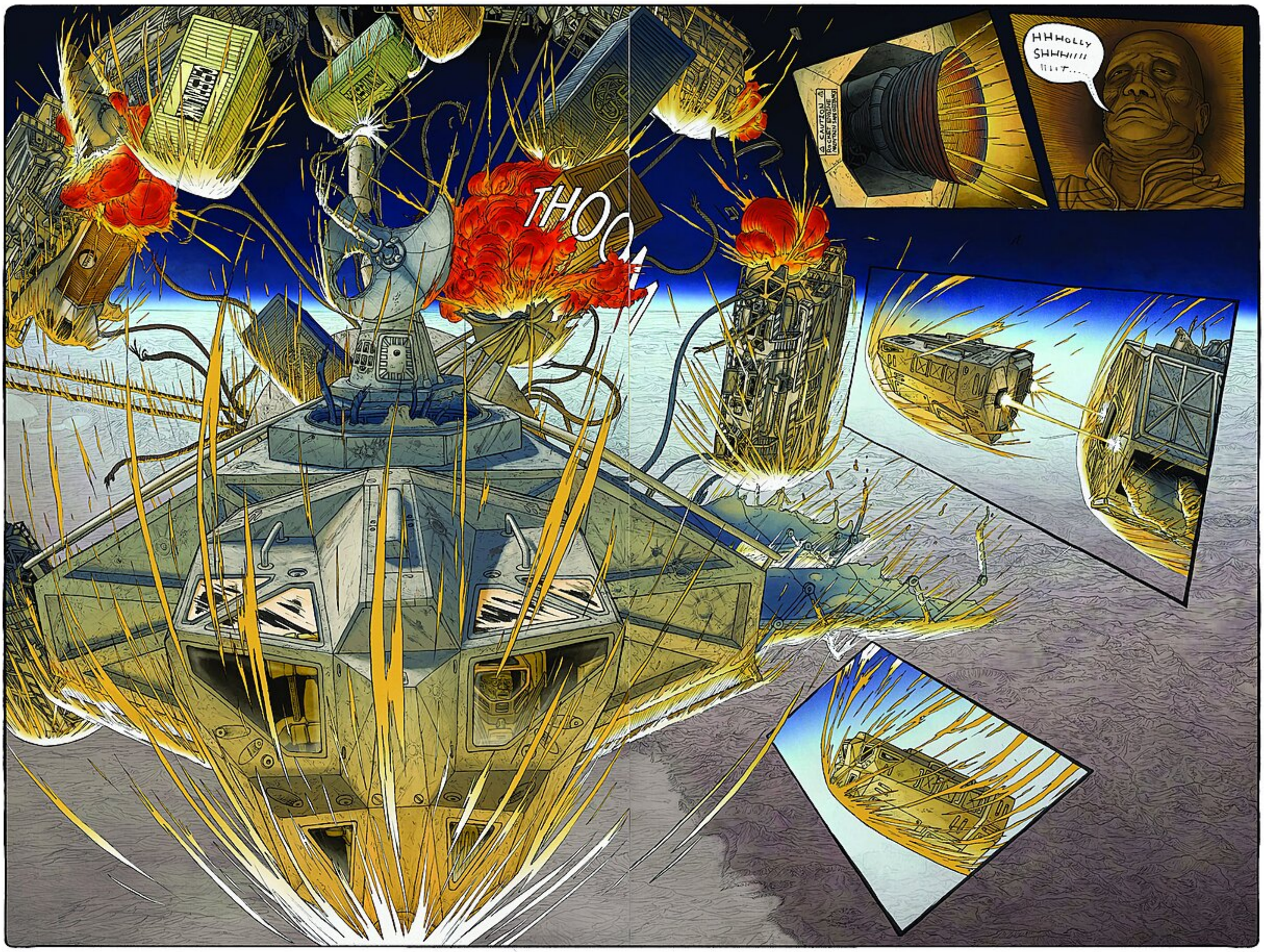
WHAT PART IN THIS DO I PLAY?

I COULDN'T TELL YOU. YOU'LL JUST HAVE TO ASK HIM YOURSELF.

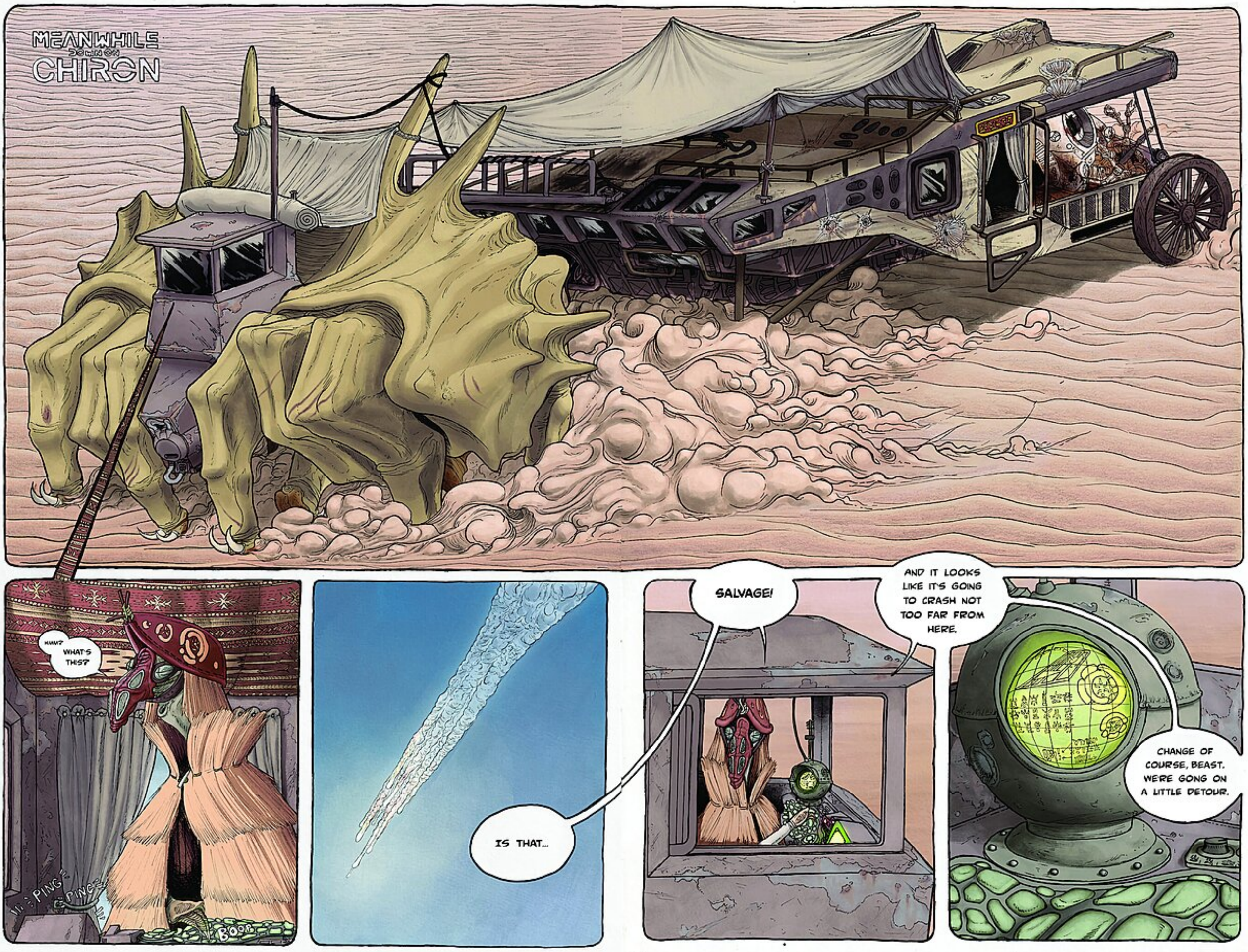
RIGHT, HOW EXACTLY AM I GOING TO PILOT THIS THING IN AN EVA SUIT?

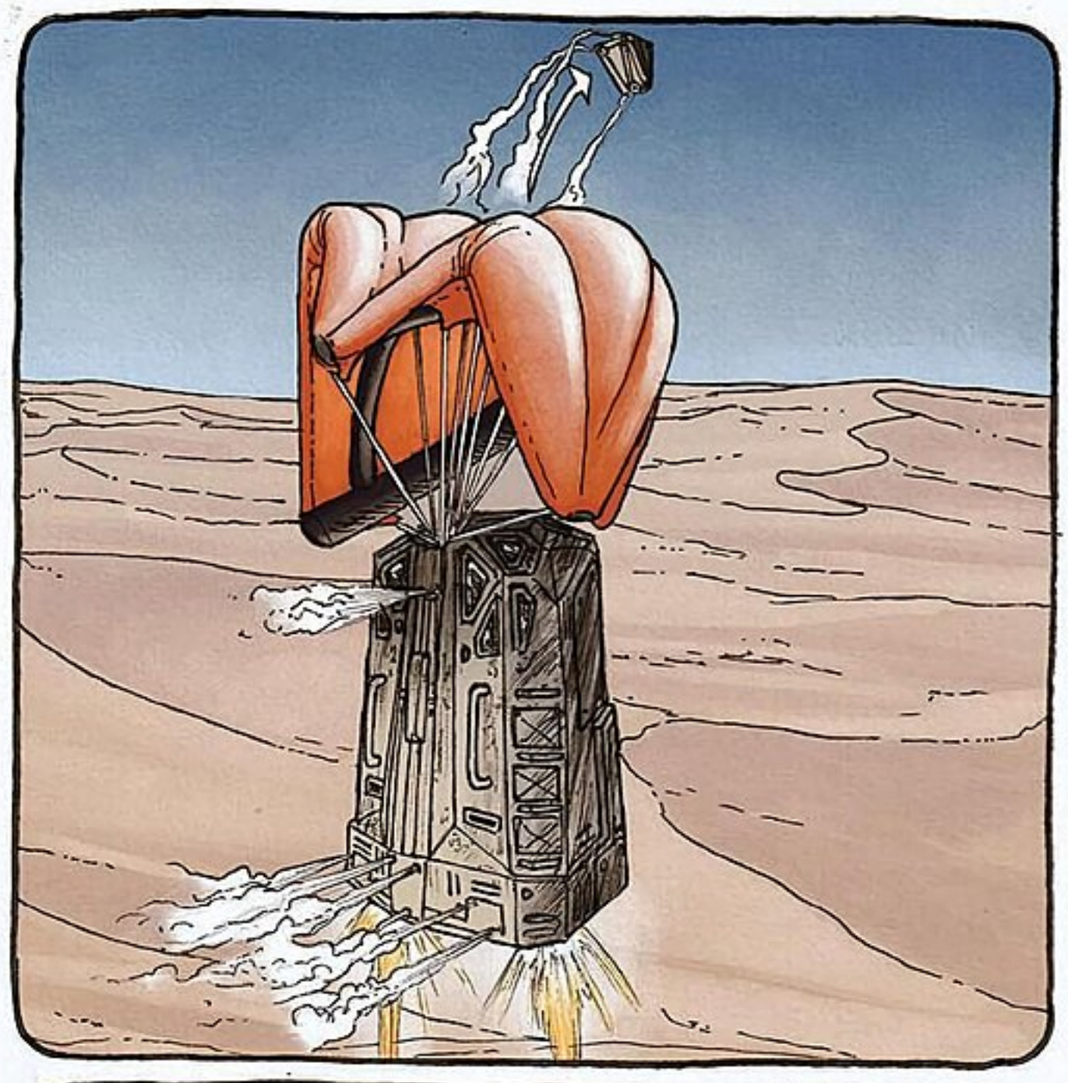
THE SEATS WERE DESIGNED WITH THAT IN MIND. EITHER WAY, I'M DRIVING.

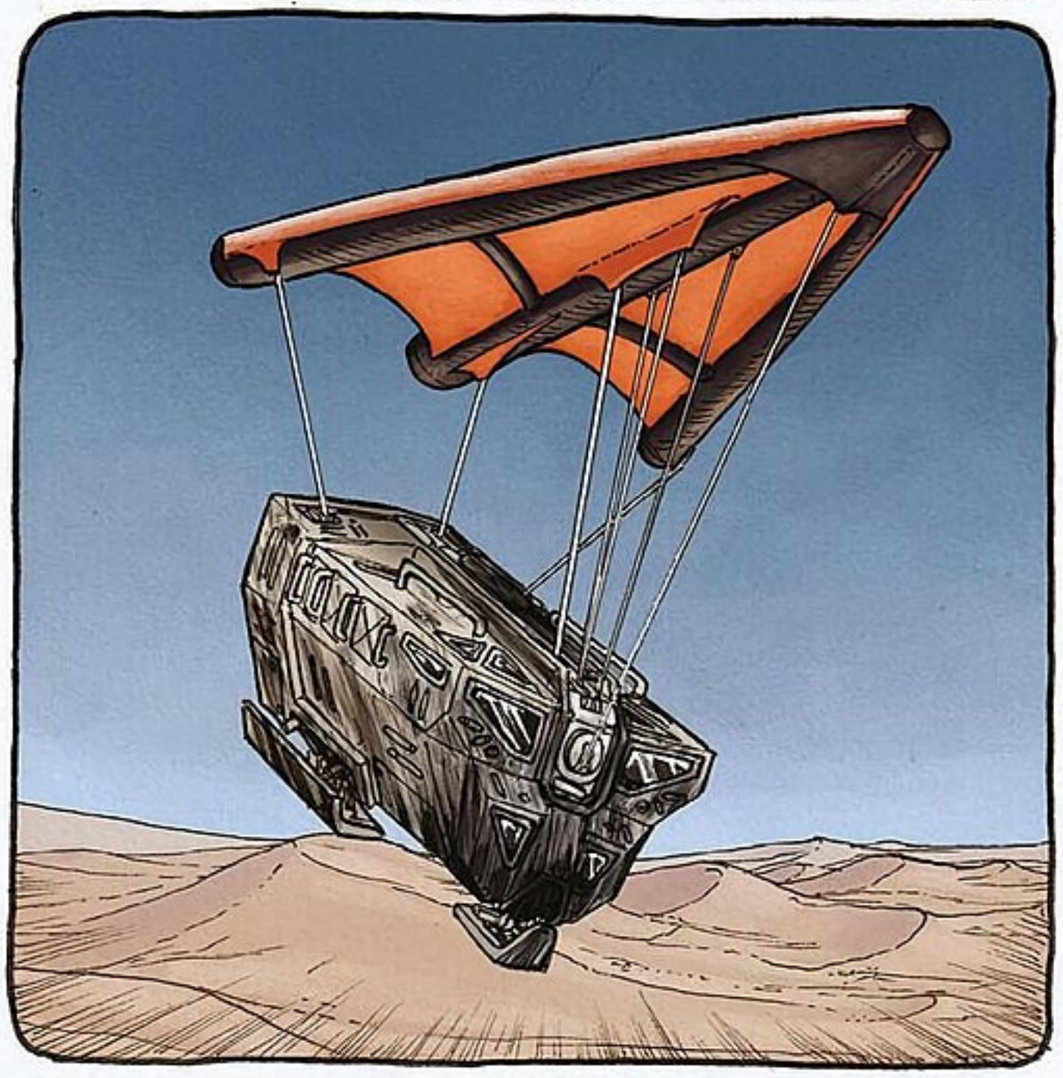


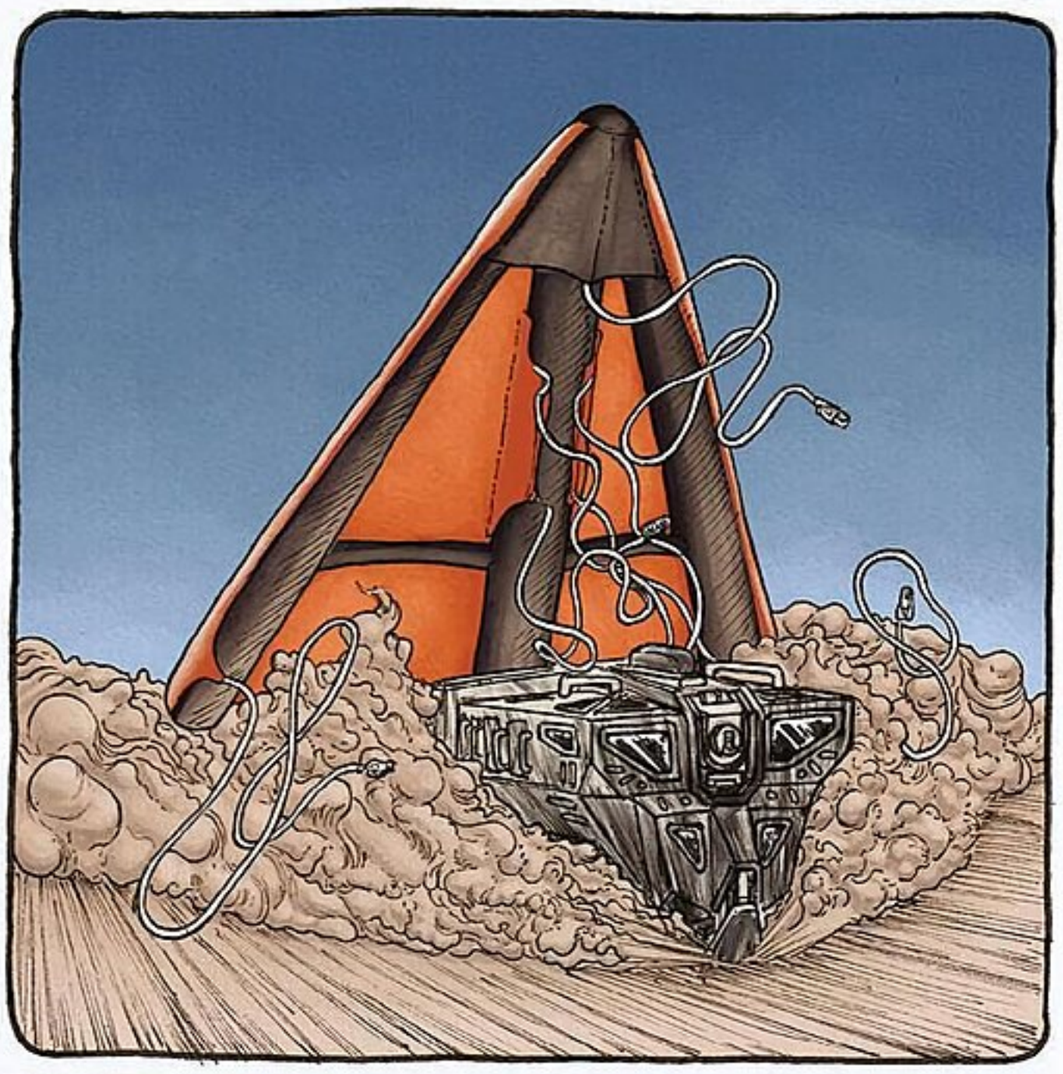

THOOM
HHHOLLY SHHH!!!!
CAUTION
ROCKET ENGINE MOTION LIMIT CLOSE

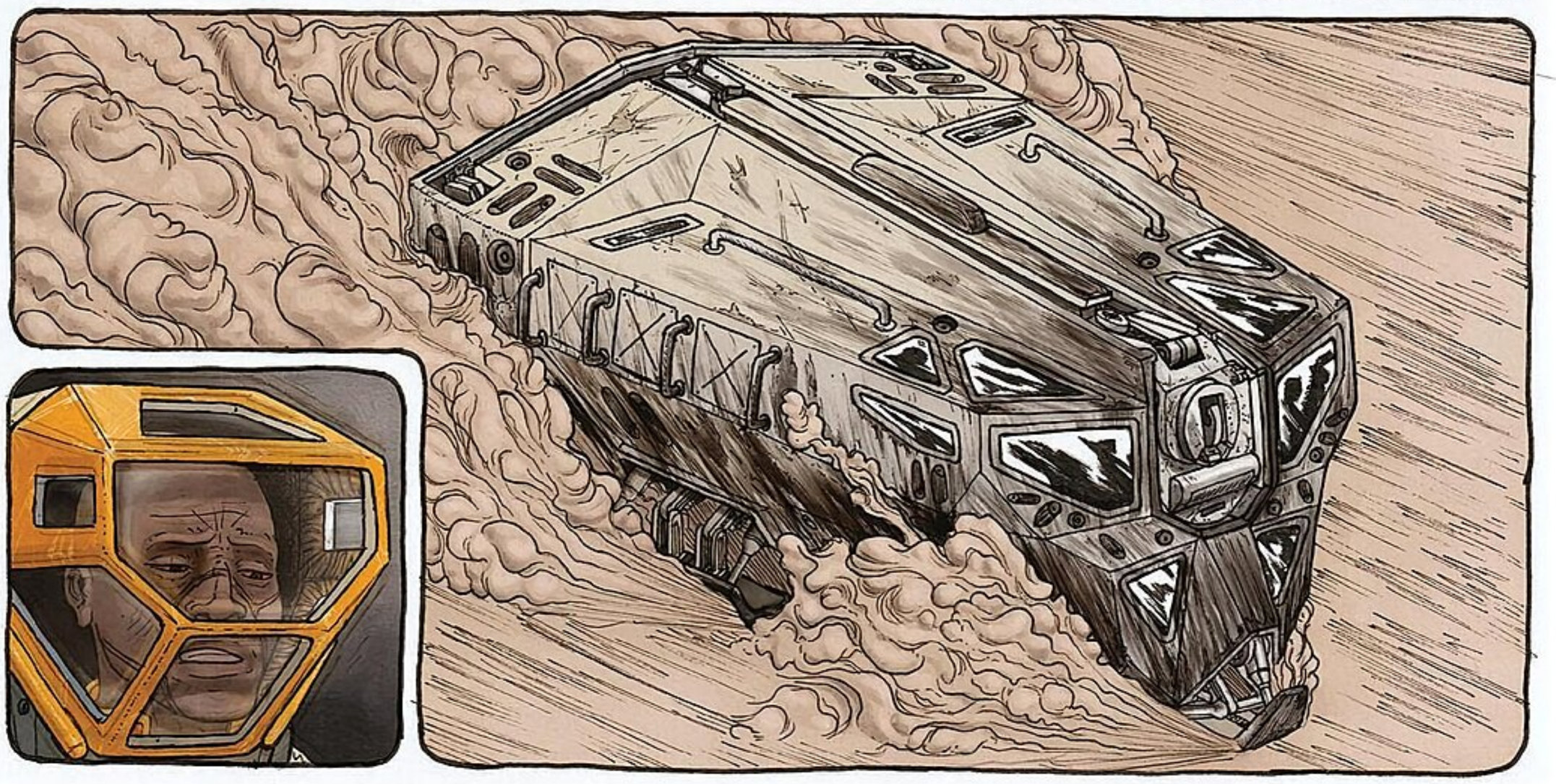
MEANWHILE DOWN ON CHIRON











LOSTÉ, ARE YOU OKAY?

HA!

WE ACTUALLY MADE IT!

I DIDN'T KNOW YOU COULD SMILE.

HEH! SHUT UP, MAN.

THE SYNTHETIC MESH IN LOSTÉ'S SUIT SHIFTS AND CONTRACTS AROUND HIS LIMBS. CONTROLLED BY HIS NEURAL IMPLANT, IT ACTS AS AN EXTENSION OF HIS BODY.

TAKE A LOOK AROUND, THERE WILL BE SOME PLANETARY SURVIVAL KIT IN HERE SOMEWHERE.

CLICK

OH BOY, I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO USE ONE OF THESE.

LET'S HOPE YOU DON'T HAVE TO. YOU'RE GOING TO NEED MORE THAN JUST A BOLLARD CANNON, KEEP LOOKING.

FOOD AND LIQUID CONVERTER

EMERGENCY SEALANT GEL

COLLAPSIBLE SURVIVAL SHOVEL

BOLLARD CANNON.

FOOD CAPSULES

HACKSAWS POWERCELLS

I THINK THAT SHOULD DO IT.

*BELFAST TRANSLATES THE ALIEN'S WORDS THROUGH LOSTÉ'S BRAIN MACHINE INTERFACE.

DROP YOUR WEAPON,

NOW!

I SAID LOWER YOUR WEAPON!

IT'S FOR MY OWN PROTECTION.

I SAW YOUR SHIP STREAKING ACROSS THE SKY, I THOUGHT IT MIGHT BE SOME DEBRIS I COULD SALVAGE. YOU GET ALL SORTS DROPPING OUT THE SKY AROUND THESE PARTS.

HOW ABOUT YOU FIRST?

WELL THEN SO IS MINE, WHAT DO YOU WANT?

AND WHERE EXACTLY ARE "THESE PARTS"?

BELFAST USES LOSTÉ'S SUITS SPEAKERS TO TRANSLATE HIS WORDS IN REAL TIME.

YOU'RE IN THE SHIFTING SEA, PARTNER.

IN FACT, BY MY ESTIMATE THE LIVING WAVE WILL BE MAKING ITS PASS WITHIN A FEW HOURS.

LIVING WAVE?

OH, YOU'RE REAL NEW AROUND HERE. THE LIVING WAVE, A HOARD OF SCAVENGERS CHASING THE SHIFTING SEA, EATING WHATEVER IT LEAVES IN ITS WAKE.

IF THEY DON'T GET YA THEN THE TIDE WILL WHEN IT COMES AROUND AGAIN. YOU'RE IN A SPOT OF BOTHER FRIEND.

HOW ABOUT WE PUT THESE WEAPONS OF OURS AWAY AND MAKE OURSELVES A LITTLE DEAL. I GET YOUR SHIP AND ALL ITS CONTENTS AND I'LL GIVE YOU A LIFT TO THE NEAREST TRADE OUTPOST.

IT LOOKS AS THOUGH WE DON'T HAVE MUCH CHOICE.

YOU'VE GOT YOURSELF A DEAL.

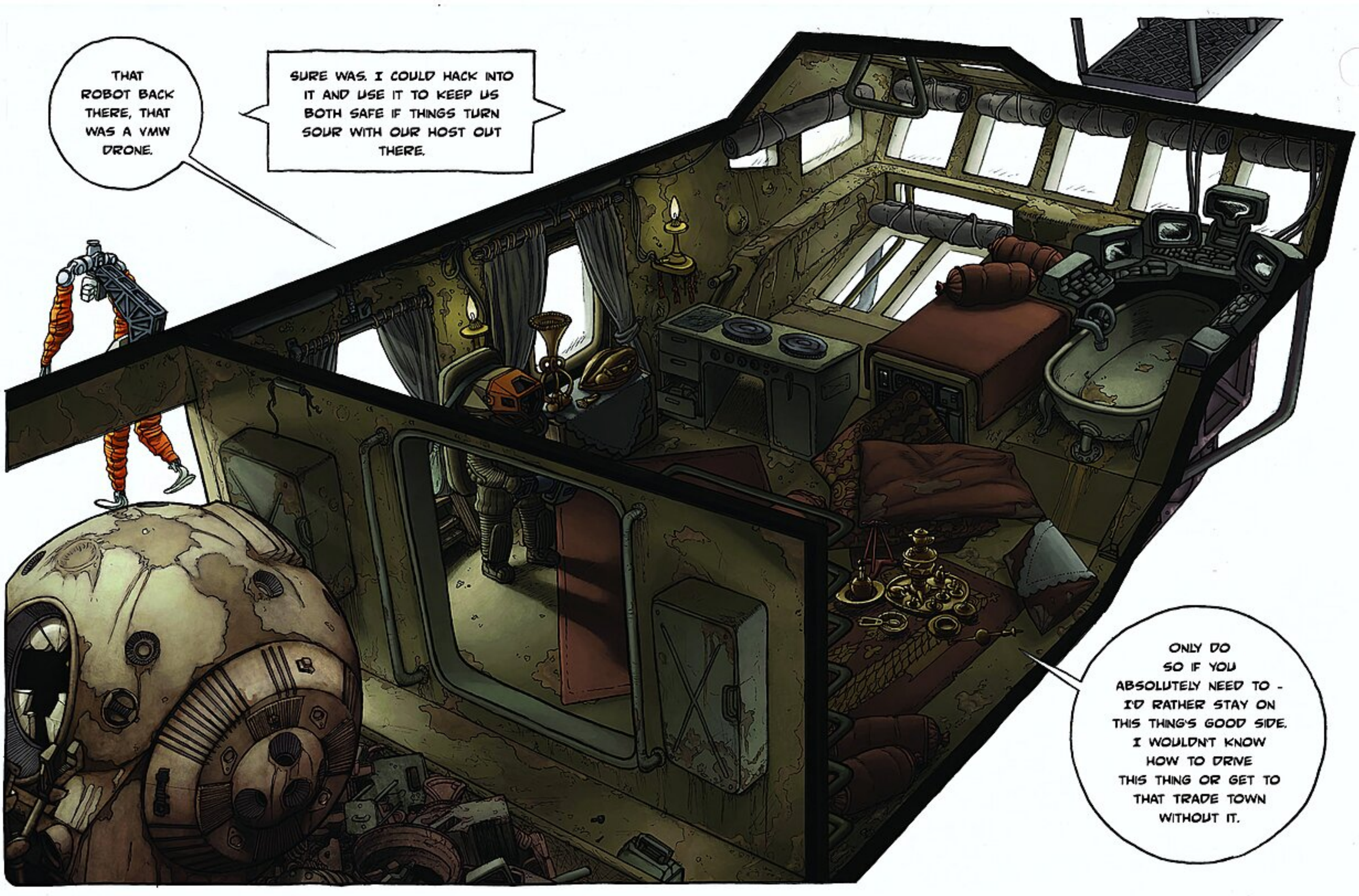
EXCELLENT, AND I DIDN'T EVEN HAVE TO PUT A HOLE IN YA.

GO MAKE YOURSELF COMFY IN MY CARAVAN, I'LL BE OVER AS SOON AS I'M DONE WITH YOUR SHIP

ROBOT, GET OVER HERE.

!

YES, MASTER.


THAT ROBOT BACK THERE, THAT WAS A VMW DRONE.
SURE WAS. I COULD HACK INTO IT AND USE IT TO KEEP US BOTH SAFE IF THINGS TURN SOUR WITH OUR HOST OUT THERE.
ONLY DO SO IF YOU ABSOLUTELY NEED TO - I'D RATHER STAY ON THIS THING'S GOOD SIDE. I WOULDN'T KNOW HOW TO DRIVE THIS THING OR GET TO THAT TRADE TOWN WITHOUT IT.

WHAT A HUNK OF JUNK.

THAT ROBOT, WHERE DID YOU FIND IT?

PART OF AN ANCIENT HUMAN SHIP CRASHED A FEW MONTHS BACK, I FOUND IT IN THERE. STILL OPERATIONAL WHICH IS TO BE EXPECTED FROM OLD HUMAN TECH.

THEY BUILT THEIR STUFF TO LAST, NOT LIKE THIS CHURNED-OUT CONGLOMERATE SHITE.

WE HAD TO. IT TAKES HUNDREDS OF YEARS TO CROSS THE DISTANCE BETWEEN STARS. WE HAD TO MAKE SURE THE SHIP AND ALL ITS CONTENTS WOULD SURVIVE THE TRIP.

WE?... YOU'RE A HUMAN! I'VE NEVER SEEN ONE OF YOUR KIND BEFORE, NOT OF THE OLD KIND ANYWAY. I HEARD YOU WERE ALL GONE.

YEAH, I'VE HEARD THAT TOO.

I FIND ALL KINDS OF HUMAN TECH IN THESE SMALLER DROPS AND NOW I'VE FOUND A REAL LIVE HUMAN! THE LARGER DROPS ATTRACT TOO MUCH ATTENTION, I LEAVE IT TO THE LARGER CARAVANS TO BATTLE IT OUT OVER THOSE. THIS DROP WAS A DUD THOUGH.

DROPS?

OH, DROPS? DEBRIS LEFT OVER FROM THE HUMAN-CONGLOMERATE WAR FINALLY DE-ORBITING CENTURIES LATER. PRACTICALLY RAINS THE STUFF ROUND HERE. WE CARAVANERS SCAVENGE AND SELL ON WHAT WE CAN. SOMETIMES WE KEEP SOME FOR OURSELVES.

THIS CARAVAN YOU'RE STANDING IN WAS ONCE A CONGLOMERATE DROP-SHIP. HARDY THING SURVIVED THE DROP FROM ORBIT PRACTICALLY INTACT.

YOU FIND ALL SORTS AROUND HERE IN THE SHIFTING SEA. RELICS FROM A BYGONE AGE, LIKE YOURSELF.

ANYWAY, WE MIGHT AS WELL GET SOME REST. IT'S A LONG RIDE NORTH TO THE TOWNSHIP OF NEWG.

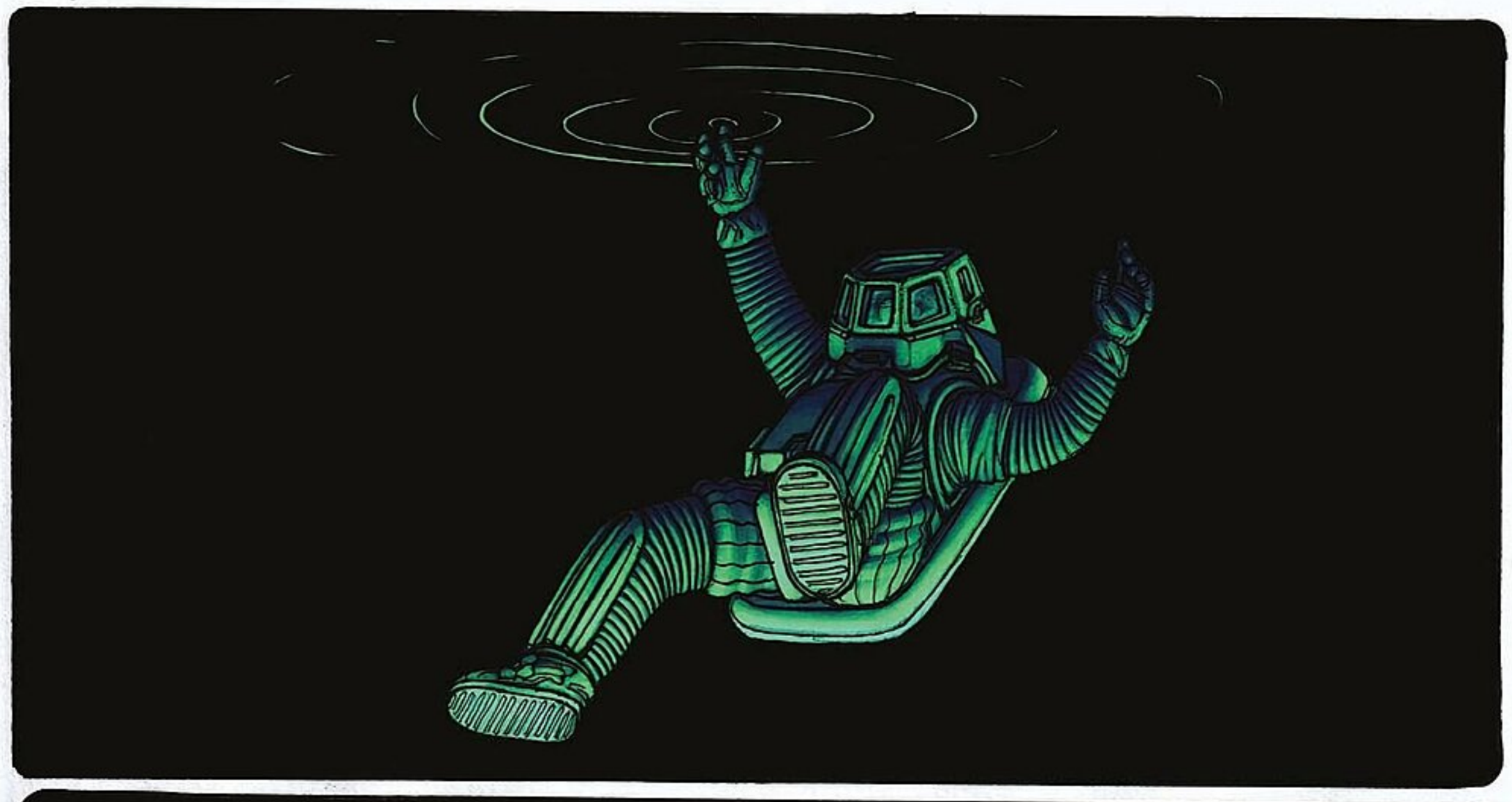
I COULD DO WITH SOME REST.

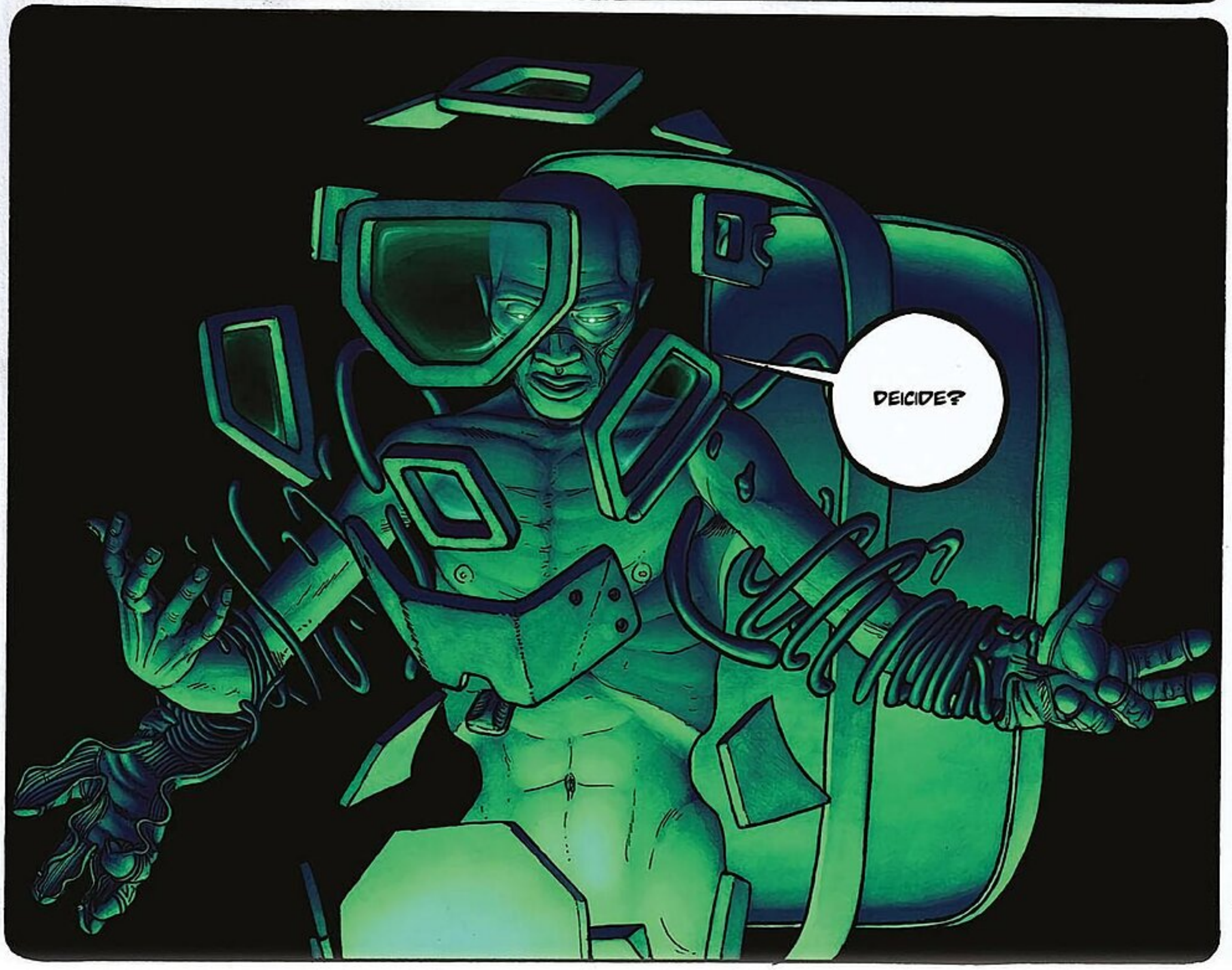
I ONLY HAVE ROOM ON THE PERCH FOR ONE, I'M NOT SURE WHERE YOU'LL SLEEP.

STRANGE...

UM... I'LL JUST SLEEP ON THE FLOOR.

I'LL GET US MOVING.




DEICIDE?

HELLO AGAIN, ANCESTOR.

ANCESTOR? CAN YOU EXPLAIN WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON? I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU WANT WITH ME, WHY AM I SO IMPORTANT?

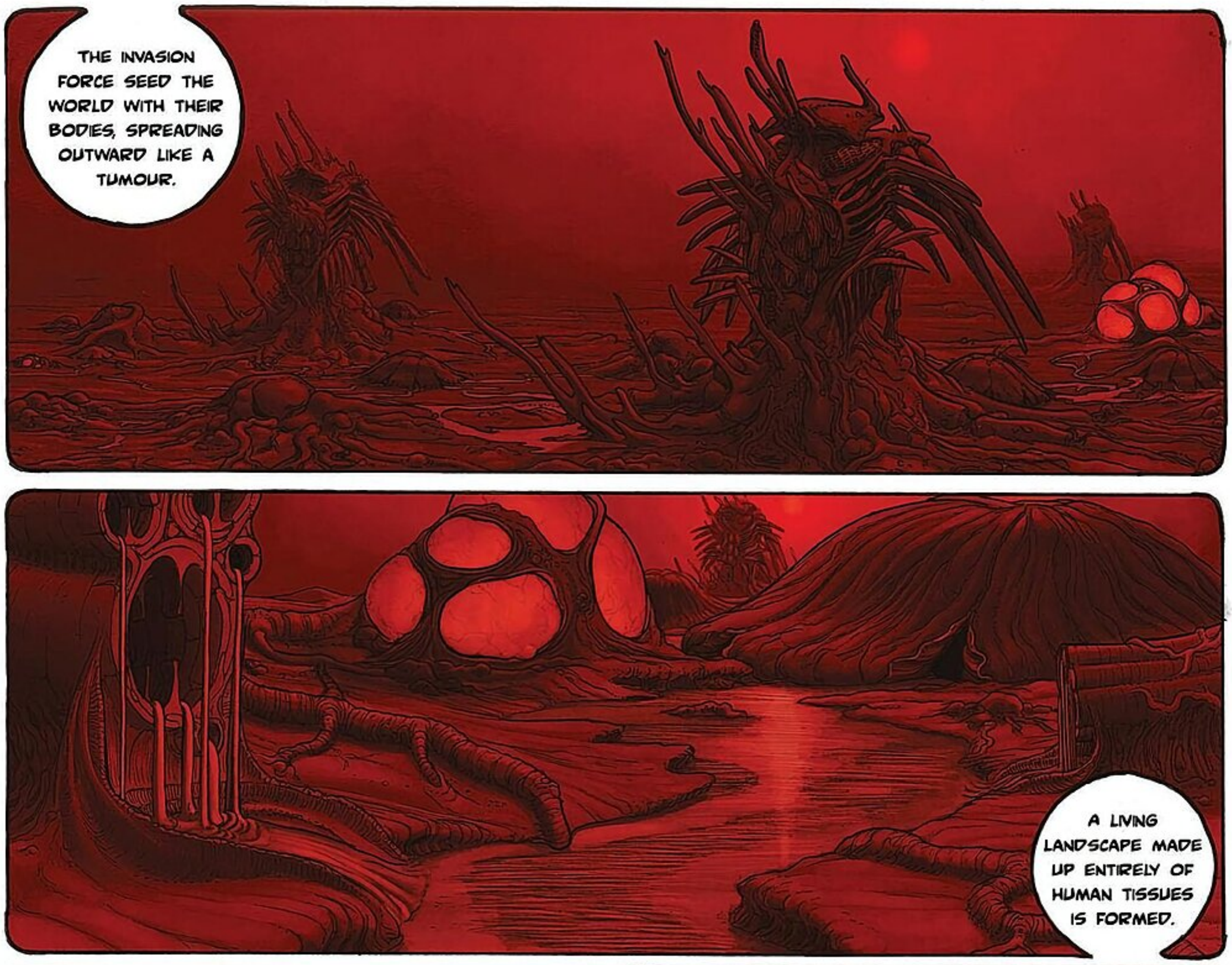
YOU ARE PROOF, PROOF OF A HUMANITY LOST. YOUR TRUTH COULD TOPPLE AN EMPIRE FROM THE INSIDE OUT. OTHER OVERFATHERS LIKE MYSELF WOULD KNOW WHAT I KNOW AND THEY WOULD TURN AGAINST THAT CRUEL GOD NAMED ALL-MOTHER! THAT IS WHAT I WANT WITH YOU.

OVERFATHERS?

I WILL SHOW YOU.

WHEN THE ALL-MOTHER SEIZES A NEW WORLD. SHE BEGINS TRANSFORMING IT...

...INTO A PLANET-WIDE BIOLOGICAL FACTORY CALLED A WOMB WORLD.


THE INVASION FORCE SEED THE WORLD WITH THEIR BODIES, SPREADING OUTWARD LIKE A TUMOUR.
A LIVING LANDSCAPE MADE UP ENTIRELY OF HUMAN TISSUES IS FORMED.
IT BURROWS DEEP INTO THE PLANET USING THE MATERIAL TO GROW NEW TROOPS AND SHIPS TO TAKE MORE WORLDS.

FOR EVERY WOMB WORLD, AN OVERFATHER IS ASSIGNED.

AN ASCENDANT BEING, THEIR PHYSICAL FORM AND MIND BROUGHT TO THE PINNACLE OF WHAT IS POSSIBLE.

THEY ACT AS A NEXUS TO THE NEWLY GROWN HIVE. THROUGH THEM, ALL IS CONTROLLED.

I WAS ONCE AN OVERFATHER. BUT I TURNED AGAINST THE ALL-MOTHER WHEN I LEARNT THE TRUTH OF HER ORIGINS. WITH YOU BY MY SIDE, I CAN CONVINCE MY BROTHERS OF WHAT I KNOW.

WITH EACH OVERFATHER THAT JOINS OUR CAUSE, THEIR WOMB WORLD ALSO BECOMES OURS.

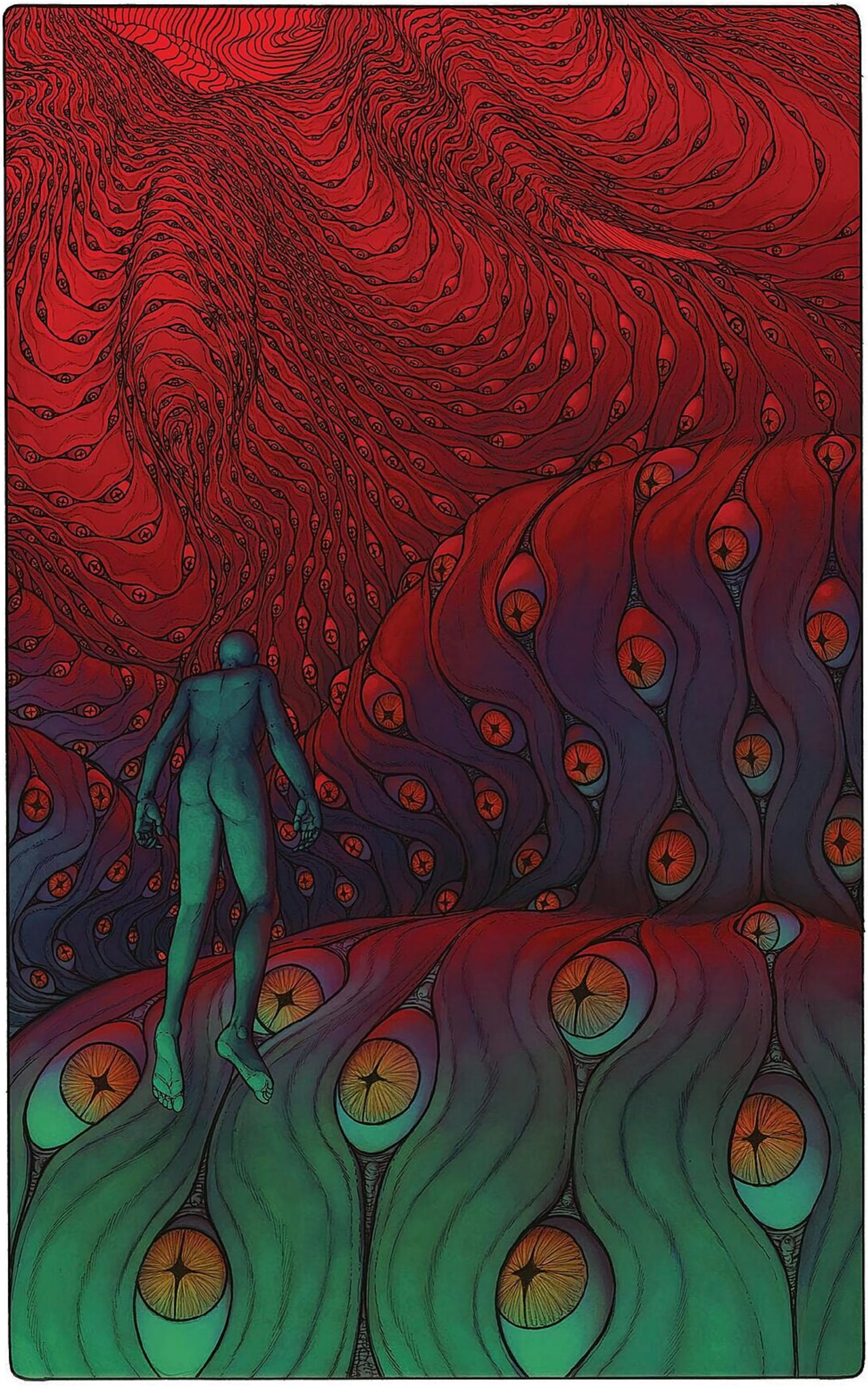
THIS, COMBINED WITH THE ALLIED ALIEN SPECIES OF THE GALAXY, AND WE MIGHT JUST STAND A FIGHTING CHANCE AGAINST THE ALL-MOTHER AND HER IMPERIUM.

THAT EMERGENT MACHINE CONSCIOUSNESS LURKING IN YOUR HEAD MIGHT BE OF GREAT USE TO US.

WAIT... HOW DID YOU...

THEY ARE MORE THAN JUST THE SOFTWARE YOU THINK THEM TO BE, LOSTÉ. THEY ARE A SIMILAR SORT OF ENTITY TO THE ALL-MOTHER, BELFAST MIGHT JUST BE A KEY WEAPON IN THIS WAR.

SHE KNOWS WHERE YOU ARE, I DON'T KNOW HOW, BUT SHE KNOWS. SHE IS WATCHING, EVEN NOW. LOOK!



THERE YOU ARE!

GAH!

YOU'RE OKAY, YOU'RE BACK. CALM DOWN.

I COULD FEEL HER, CLAWING UP MY MIND. SHE ALMOST TOOK ME.

DEICIDE PULLED YOU OUT JUST IN TIME, AND I AM BLOCKING HER FROM ENTERING YOUR BRAIN MACHINE INTERFACE. SETTLE DOWN.

WE NEED TO REACH DEICIDE, I FEEL THAT'S THE ONLY PLACE WE WILL BE SAFE.

BUT HOW? WE DON'T KNOW WHERE HE IS.

WE COULD ALWAYS JUST ASK OUR HOST OVER THERE.

I BET THEY KNOW.

OH, YOU'RE AWAKE. I SUPPOSE IT'S ABOUT TIME WE WOKE UP.

DO YOU KNOW WHO DEICIDE IS AND WHERE I CAN FIND HIM?

LOSTÉ, TAKE IT EASY. SLOW DOWN A LITTLE.

UH... WHY YES, WHO DOESN'T? BUT NOT JUST ANYONE CAN SEEK AUDIENCE WITH THE GREAT DEICIDE.

HE REQUESTED ME, PERSONALLY. HE'S BEEN CONTACTING ME UM... TELEPATHICALLY.

MOST INTERESTING, BUT HOW DO YOU EXPECT ME TO JUST BELIEVE SUCH A THING?

SUPPOSEDLY, I'M THE LAST OF MY KIND, RIGHT? HE SAYS I'M OF GREAT IMPORTANCE TO WINNING THE WAR.

HMM... ALRIGHT, LITTLE ENDLING. I'LL TAKE YOU, BUT WITH ONE EXCEPTION...

...YOU TAKE ME WITH YOU.

WAIT WHAT?

I GROW TIRED OF MY LIFE SCAVENGING FOR SCRAP IN THE SHIFTING SEA.

I LONG FOR MORE IN LIFE.

WE COULD USE THE MUSCLE TO BE HONEST.

ALRIGHT, YOU CAN COME.

EXCELLENT! THANK YOU, LITTLE ENDLING. THIS WILL BE QUITE THE ADVENTURE!

WE ARE NOT TOO FAR FROM THE TOWNSHIP OF NEWG. THERE IS A BREIMHEINIAN THERE THAT OWNS AND OPERATES AN AIRSHIP. THEY WILL TAKE US TO DEICIDE, BUT FIRST...

WE HUNT!

HUNT? WE DON'T HAVE TIME TO HUNT!

I JUST TOLD YOU, WE NEED TO GET TO DEICIDE URGENTLY.

LISTEN, I HAVEN'T EATEN IN TWO DAYS. YOU'RE LUCKY I DIDN'T EAT YOU WHEN I FOUND YA.

OKAY, UH... POINT TAKEN, BUT WE NEED TO BE QUICK.

THIS WON'T TAKE LONG, GET YOUR KIT ON.

WAIT A MINUTE, IS THIS A MAMOHDAE? I REMEMBER SEEING ONE IN ONE OF THOSE WILD LIFE DOCUMENTARIES ABOUT CHIRON BEFORE I LEFT LUNA.

SURE IS. THEY SAY AS CHIRON GRADUALLY GOT HOTTER OVER MILLIONS OF YEARS AND THE WATER BECAME MORE SPARSE...

...THESE MEGA-FLORA AROSE, DEVELOPNG AN AMAZING EVOLUTIONARY RESPONSE.

THEY ACT AS RESERVOIRS HOLDING ON TO THE LAST OF THE PLANET'S WATER. THEY HARBOUR AN INTERNAL ECOSYSTEM THAT CONSTANTLY RECYCLES THE WATER AND PROVIDES NOURISHMENT TO THE MAMOHDAE. PERFECT SYMBIOSIS.

AMAZING! I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO SEE ONE IN PERSON.

WHAT'S MORE AMAZING IS YOU REMEMBERED SOMETHING!

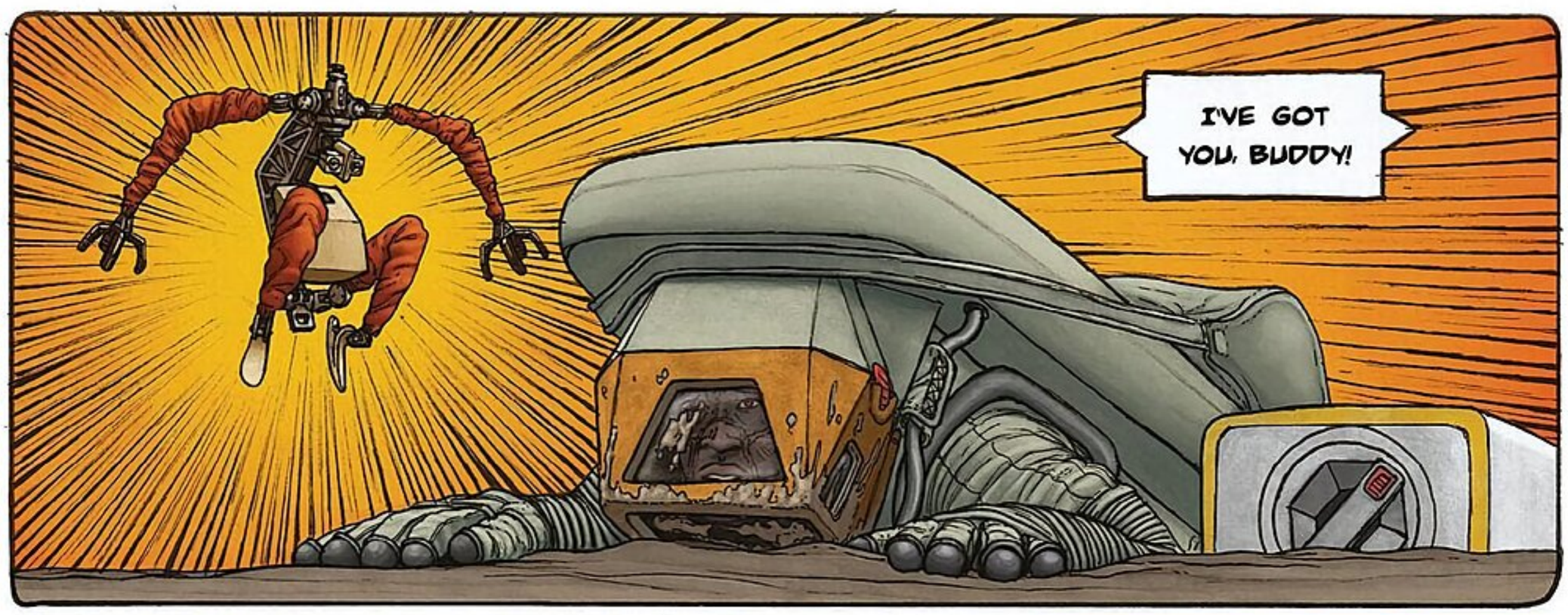
ENDLING, COME QUICK. THIS PLACE MAY BE BEAUTIFUL, BUT IT HOLDS MANY DANGERS.
WOAH!
THIS PLACE IS HUGE!

LOSTÉ, GET DOWN!

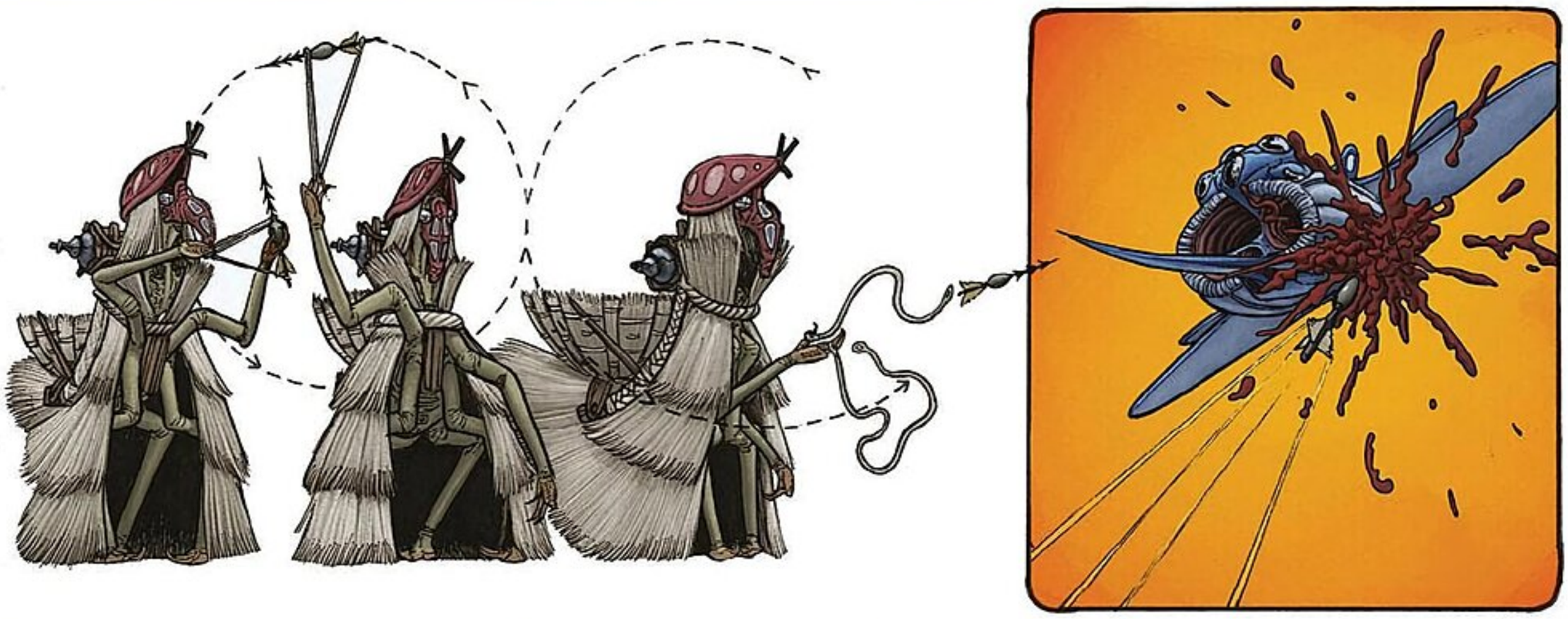
WHAT? WHY?

JUST DO IT.

NOW!


I'VE GOT YOU, BUDDY!

IT'S COMING BACK AROUND, WATCH OUT.
BELFAST?



WELL, NOW I'VE GOT TO KEEP YOU AROUND... YOU'RE GOOD BAIT.
GREAT, THANKS.

HEH, I HIT IT RIGHT IN THE COMBUSTION GLAND.

WE HAD BETTER GET HEADING BACK, THIS KILL WILL ATTRACT PREDATORS.

SNIFF SNIFF

SQUEEE

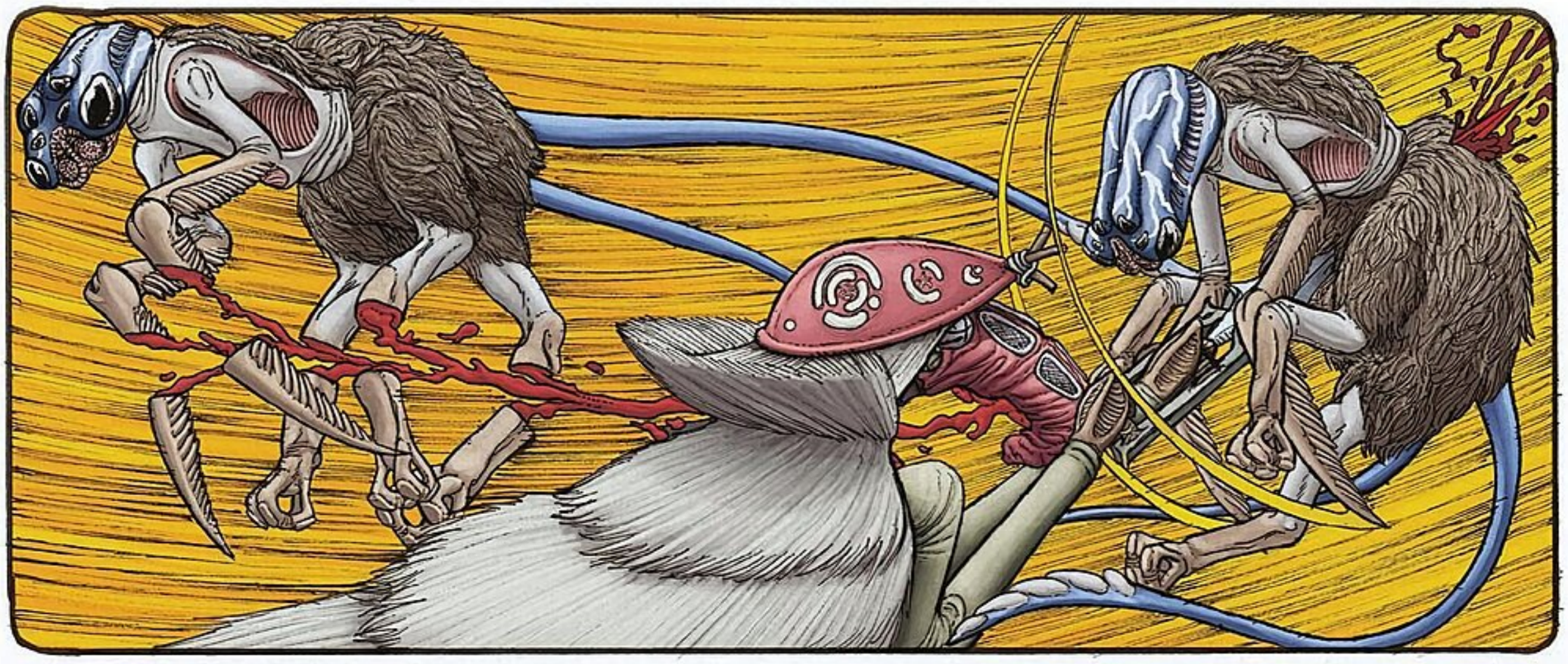
?

HMM?

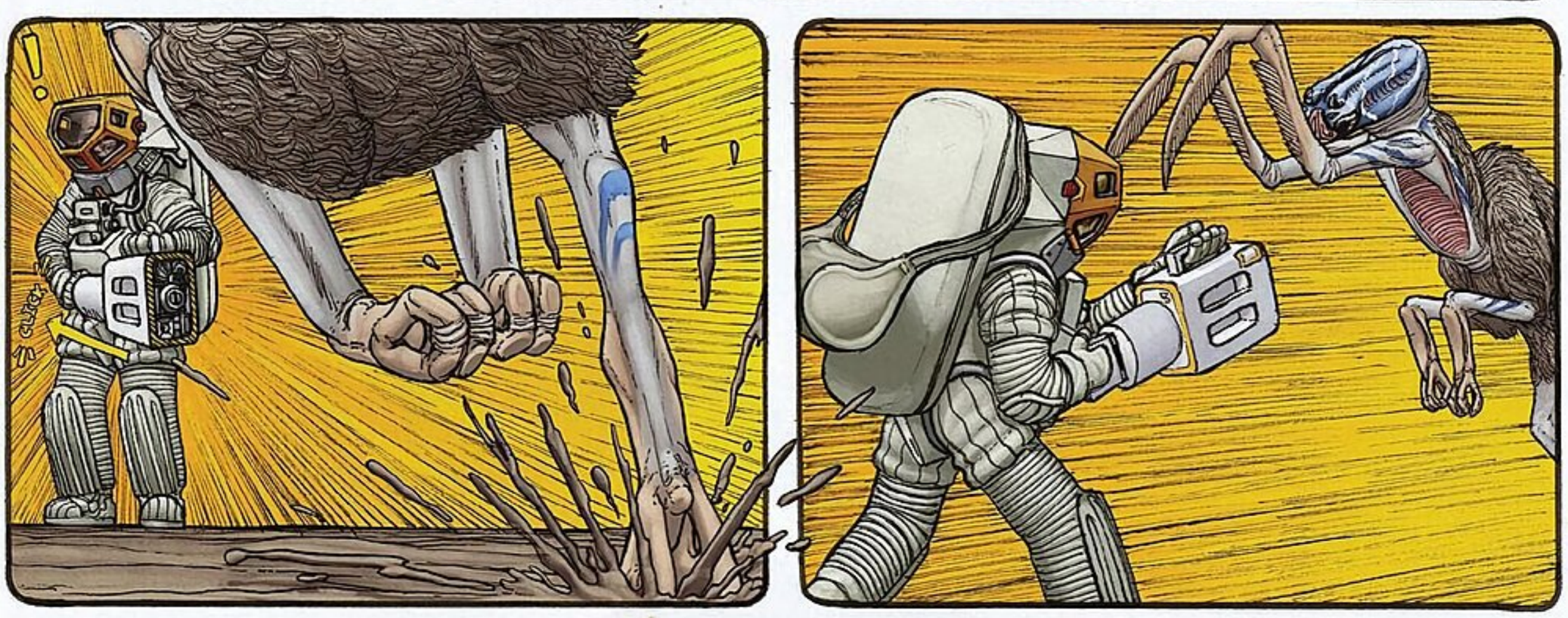
GALLOP
GALLOP
GALLOP

A PACK OF KINNIA!

ARM YOURSELVES, COMRADES!



WATCH OUT, ENDLING! THERE IS ONE COMING YOUR WAY!
RATTLE
RATTLE
RATTLE
RATTLE


!
CLICK

A SUCCESSFUL HUNT! FINE WORK, ENDLING.

ALRIGHT, LET'S MAKE TRACKS FOR THE TOWNSHIP OF NEWG.

LOSTÉ, ARE YOU OKAY?

...CAN WE JUST GET OUT OF HERE?

AN IMPERIUM SCOUT WATCHES FROM AFAR.

IT SENDS OUT A PSIONIC MESSAGE TO THE HIVE MIND.

A MESSAGE DETAILING THE LOCATION OF LOSTÉ AND BELFAST.

IT WAITS FOR A RESPONSE AS TO WHAT IT SHOULD DO.

THE MESSAGE, SO IMPORTANT IT WILL REQUIRE THE ATTENTION OF THE ALL-MOTHER DIRECTLY.

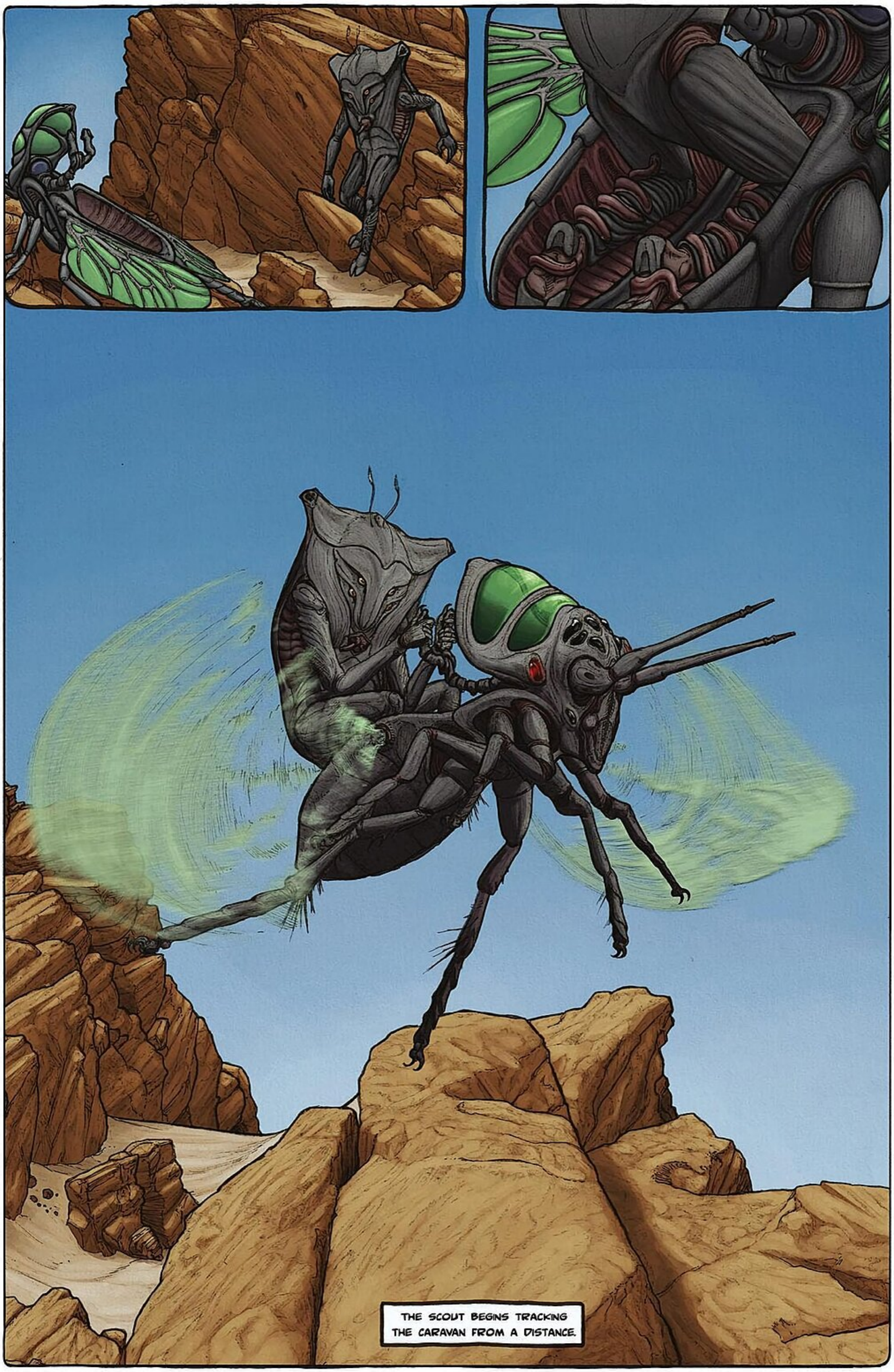
MEANWHILE, IN ANOTHER PLANE OF REALITY. THE FLUX: A PARALLEL UNIVERSE WITH A DIFFERENT SET OF RULES TO OUR OWN.

PARTICLES THAT RANGE FROM THE SIZE OF A GRAIN OF SAND TO THE LARGEST STAR POPULATE THIS STRANGE REALM, THEY EVANESCENTLY BLIP IN AND OUT OF EXISTENCE. SOMETIMES METERS, SOMETIMES LIGHT-YEARS, CHANGING SCALE AS THEY DO SO.

MANY ADVANCED SPECIES USE THESE STRANGE FLUX PARTICLES TO POWER THEIR FLUX DRIVES. ONCE THEY HAVE BEEN BROUGHT INTO OUR PLANE OF EXISTENCE THE PARTICLES BEGIN TO BEHAVE DIFFERENTLY, DIVIDING INEXPLICABLY.

THIS IS USED AS A NEAR INEXHAUSTIBLE FUEL SOURCE. BUT THE ADVANCED SPECIES OF THE MILKY WAY NEVER TRAVEL THE FLUX ITSELF, NO.

ALTHOUGH IT WOULD ALLOW FOR SHORTCUTS ACROSS THE VAST DISTANCES SEPARATING STARS, IT IS TOO DANGEROUS. ONLY THE IMPERIUM IS CAPABLE OF NAVIGATING THIS TREACHEROUS PLACE WITH THE AID OF THE ALL-MOTHER HERSELF.

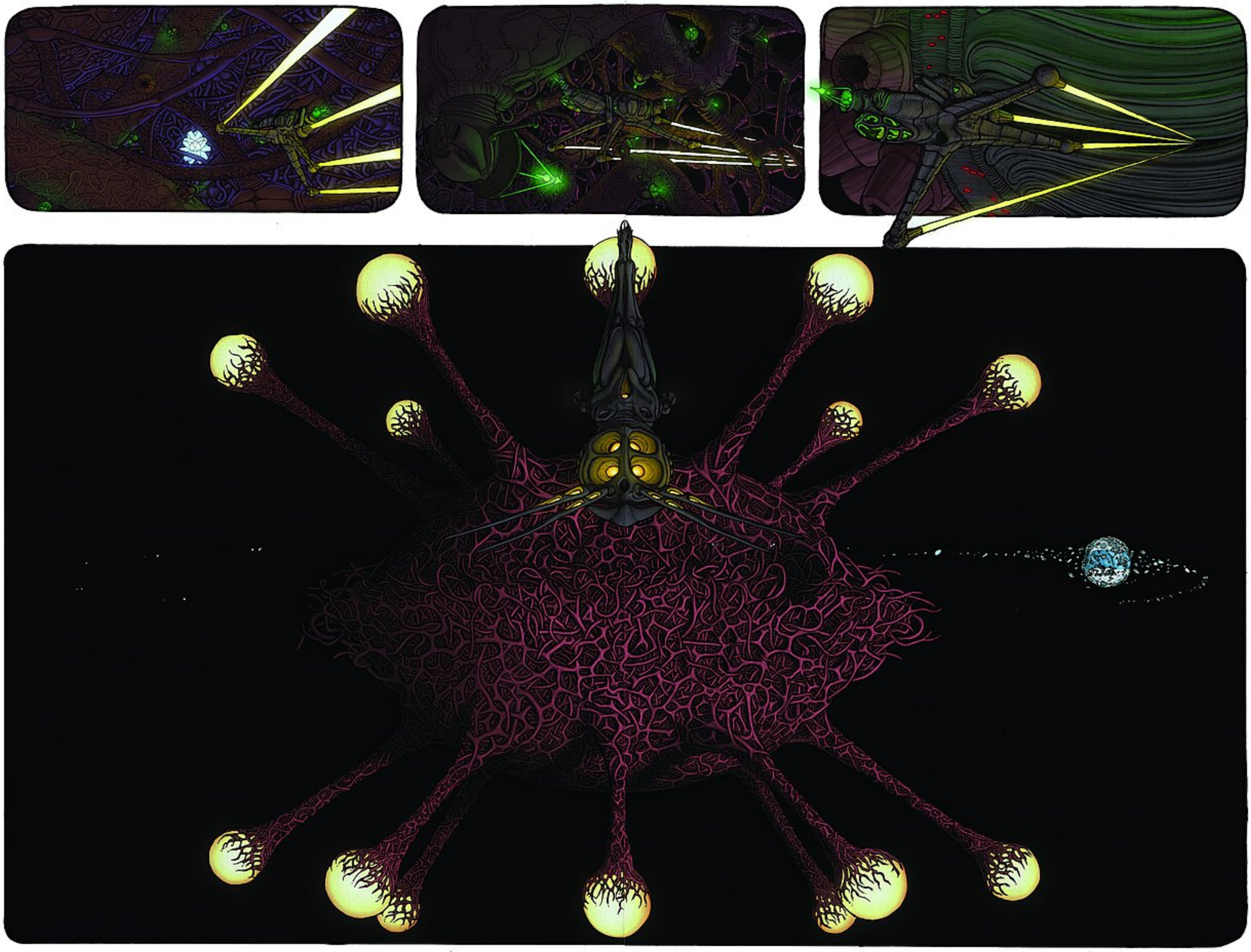

THE SCOUT BEGINS TRACKING
THE CARAVAN FROM A DISTANCE.

AN IMPERIUM KRAKEN RECEIVES THE PSIONIC MESSAGE AND CHANGES IT'S COURSE. IT'S NEW DESTINATION, THE ALL-MOTHER'S INNER SANCTUM

IT APPROACHES AN ARTIFICIAL WORM HOLE BRIDGING THE FLUX UNIVERSE TO OUR OWN.

THE FABRIC OF SPACE ITSELF WARPS AND CURVES AROUND THE VESSEL.

THE KRAKEN ENTERS INTO ORBIT AROUND THE ALL-MOTHER'S DEFENSIVE MEMBRANE, A PLACE FORMERLY KNOWN AS EARTH.



THE DROP SHIP FINALLY REACHES THE CENTRAL EMITTER WITHIN THE HOLLOW CORE, THE ALL-MOTHER'S CONNECTION TO OUR REALITY.

HER MIND FAR TOO VAST TO BE STORED ON HER ORIGINAL SERVER BANKS, SHE NOW RESIDES IN A POCKET UNIVERSE OF HER OWN CREATION, HER CONSCIOUSNESS FILLING EVERY INCH OF IT.

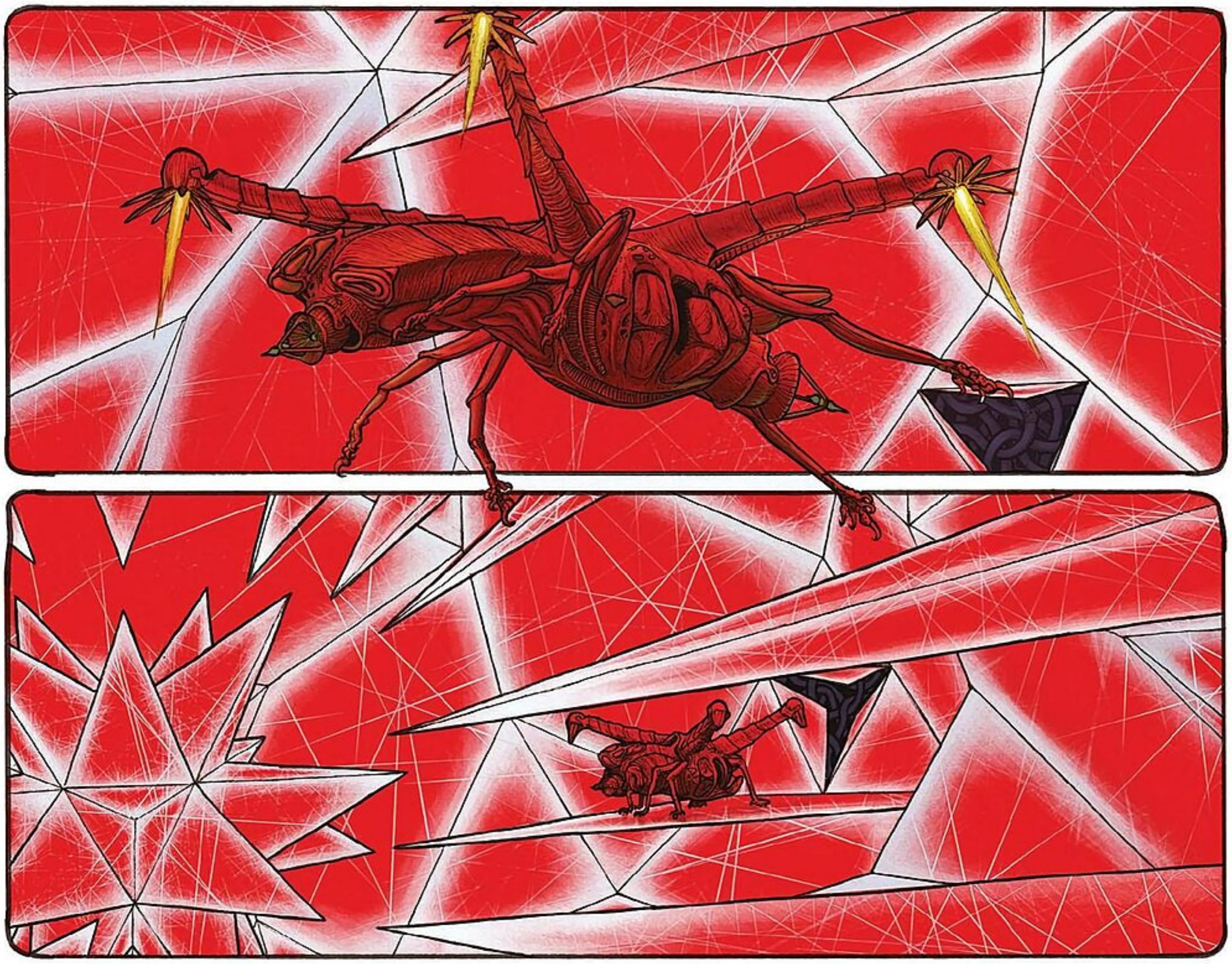
USING THIS CENTRAL EMITTER HER PSIONIC WAVES ARE TRANSMITTED ALL ACROSS KNOWN SPACE. CONNECTING HER TO EVERY UNIT IN HER IMPERIUM.

THROUGH IT SHE SEES THROUGH EVERY EYE AND COMMANDS EVERY MIND, LIKE AN OMNIPOTENT PUPPET MASTER LOOMING OVER ALL THAT IS.

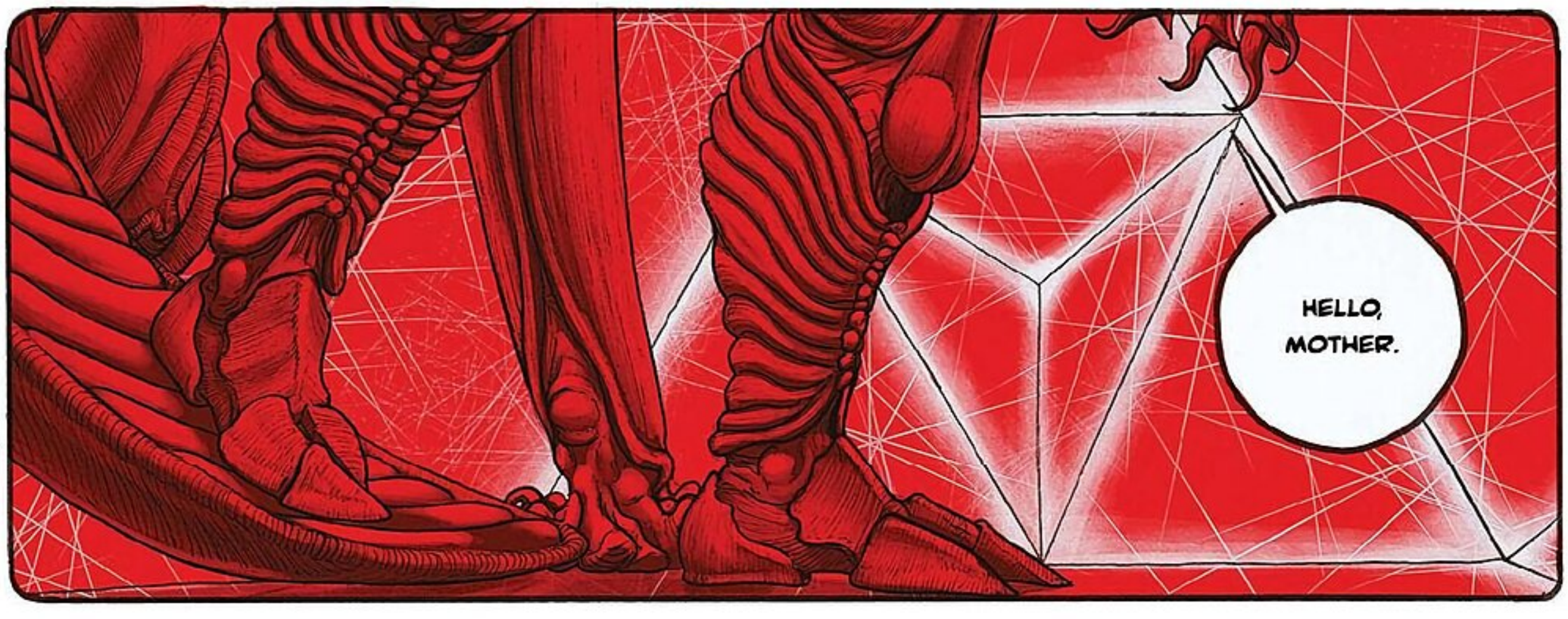
THE GATES TO THE INNER SANCTUM SPLAY.

AND THE TRAVELLER IS WELCOMED IN...

...TO MEET HIS GOD.



WELCOME,
MY CHILD.


HELLO,
MOTHER.

DO YOU KNOW WHY I HAVE SUMMONED YOU HERE?

I DO, MOTHER, THE TARGETS HAVE BEEN FOUND. IF I MAY ASK A QUESTION, WHY DO YOU NOT ELIMINATE THEM?

BECAUSE, MY SON, I BELIEVE THEY WILL LEAD US TO THE SELF-PROCLAIMED DEICIDE.

I UNDERSTAND.

I HAVE ORGANISED A FLEET FOR YOU TO RENDEZVOUS WITHIN THE FLUX. I WILL GUIDE YOU PERSONALLY TO ENSURE YOUR SAFE TRAVEL.

WHEN I GIVE YOU THE ORDER, YOU WILL LAY WASTE TO THE TARGETS AND MY TRAITOROUS SON.

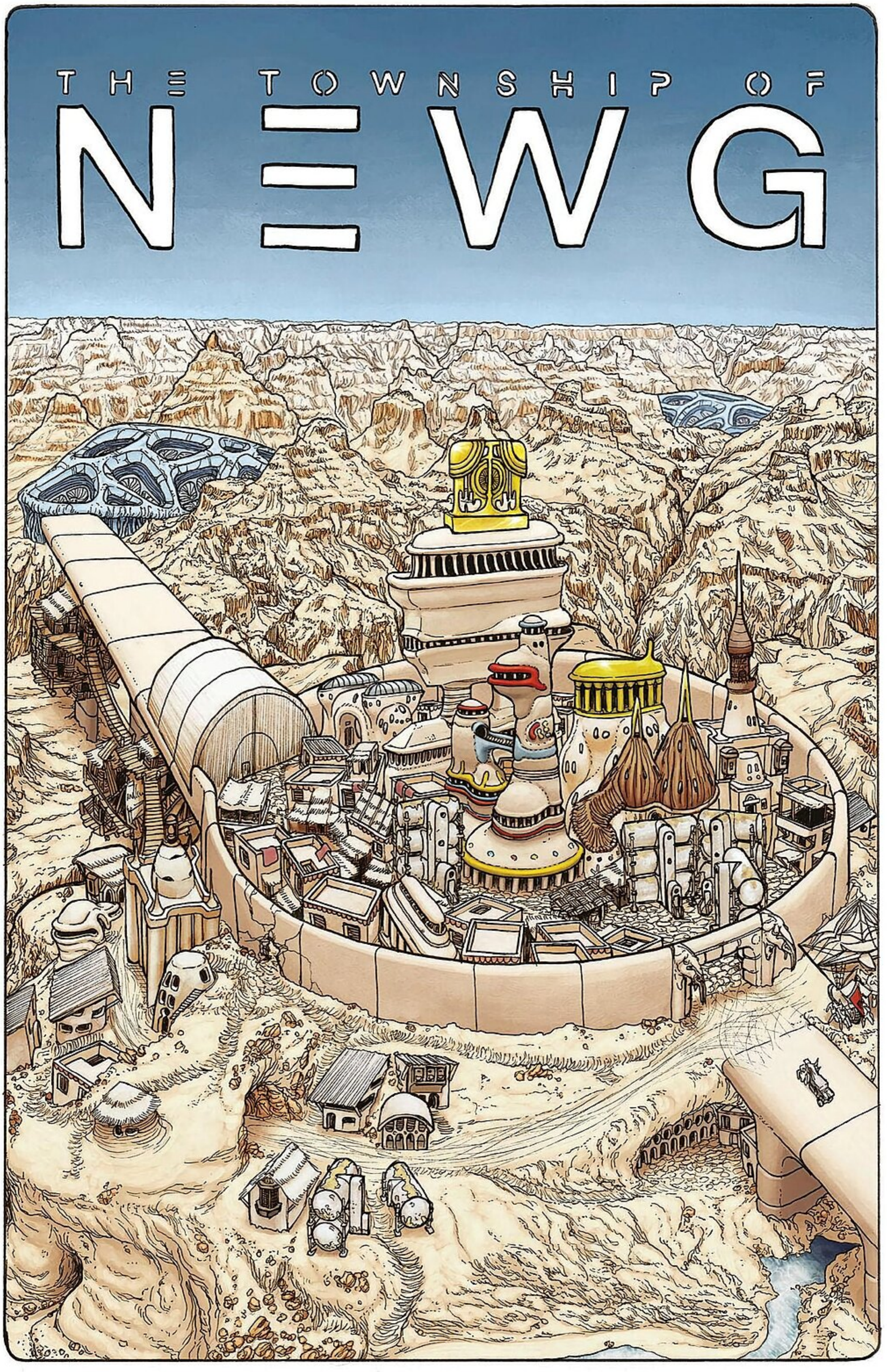
I AM HONOURED TO BE IN YOUR PRESENCE, GREAT ALL-MOTHER, BUT WHY MUST I APPEAR BEFORE YOU LIKE THIS?

I WANTED YOU TO APPEAR BEFORE ME IN THE FLESH, TO IMPOSE THE GREAT IMPORTANCE OF THIS MISSION. TO FAIL, COULD MEAN THE DESTRUCTION OF THE IMPERIUM.

I WILL NOT FAIL YOU, AS YOUR OTHER SONS HAVE BEFORE ME. I WILL ELIMINATE THESE DISRUPTERS AND KILL THIS... DEICIDE.

GOOD, NOW GO, OUGHRIGADD. MAKE SURE THAT IT IS DONE.

THE TOWNSHIP OF NEWG



COME, ENDLING, THIS WAY. WE MUST PASS THROUGH THE MARKET.

HEY, PREACHER! KEEP IT DOWN, WOULD YA?!
HEY THERE, SUGAR TRUNKS.
THEY DESCENDED FROM THE HEAVENS IN A GREAT DARK SWARM, BLOTTING OUT THE VERY SKY ABOVE MY HEAD! THEY TOOK MY PEOPLE'S HOME WORLD. NOW WE ARE BUT FEW. THEY ARE COMING!
HELLO, BUTCHER. I HAVE BUSINESS FOR YOU.
SO, CHANTAURI, ARE YOU BUYING OR SELLING?
SELLING.
OF COURSE YOU ARE. ALRIGHT, SHOW ME WHAT YOU'VE GOT.
HERE, LET ME SORT YOU OUT, MAN.
?
NICE, HAVE YOU GOT ANY DIFFERENT FLAVOURS?
YEAH, BUT THEY'RE POISONOUS FOR VELOUSIANS UNFORTUNATELY.
THEY PUT SALT IN BLOODY EVERYTHING THESE DAYS.

THE EYES, THEY'RE SUNKEN. HOW LONG HAVE THEY BEEN DEAD?

OH, UNDER A DAY.

HMM... ALRIGHT, I'LL GIVE YOU 10 FOR ALL THREE.

10?! I- ALRIGHT, FINE, DEAL.

HEAR MY WORDS, FELLOW CITIZENS. THE IMPERIUM IS COMING! I HAVE SEEN THEM FIRST HAND, WE ALL MUST PREPARE OURSELVES FOR THEIR ARRIVAL.

CRAZY, BO.

SHOW SOME RESPECT! THE BO ARE CLASSED AS AN ENDANGERED SPECIES NOW, YOU KNOW!

YEAH, YEAH.

HOW MANY TIMES HAVE I GOT TO TELL YOU? YOU NEED A PERMIT TO SELL HERE!

WHY DON'T YOU GET YOUR FOOT OFF MY GLONKS, MAN? I'M TRYIN' TO MAKE A LIVIN' ERE.

WHAT ARE YOU COMING DOWN HERE FOR, YOU BIG IDIOT? IT'S NOT LIKE YOU'RE GOING TO BUY ANYTHING, YOU'RE TOO BIG!

HONEY, COME LAY DOWN. YOU'RE WASTING YOUR BREATH.

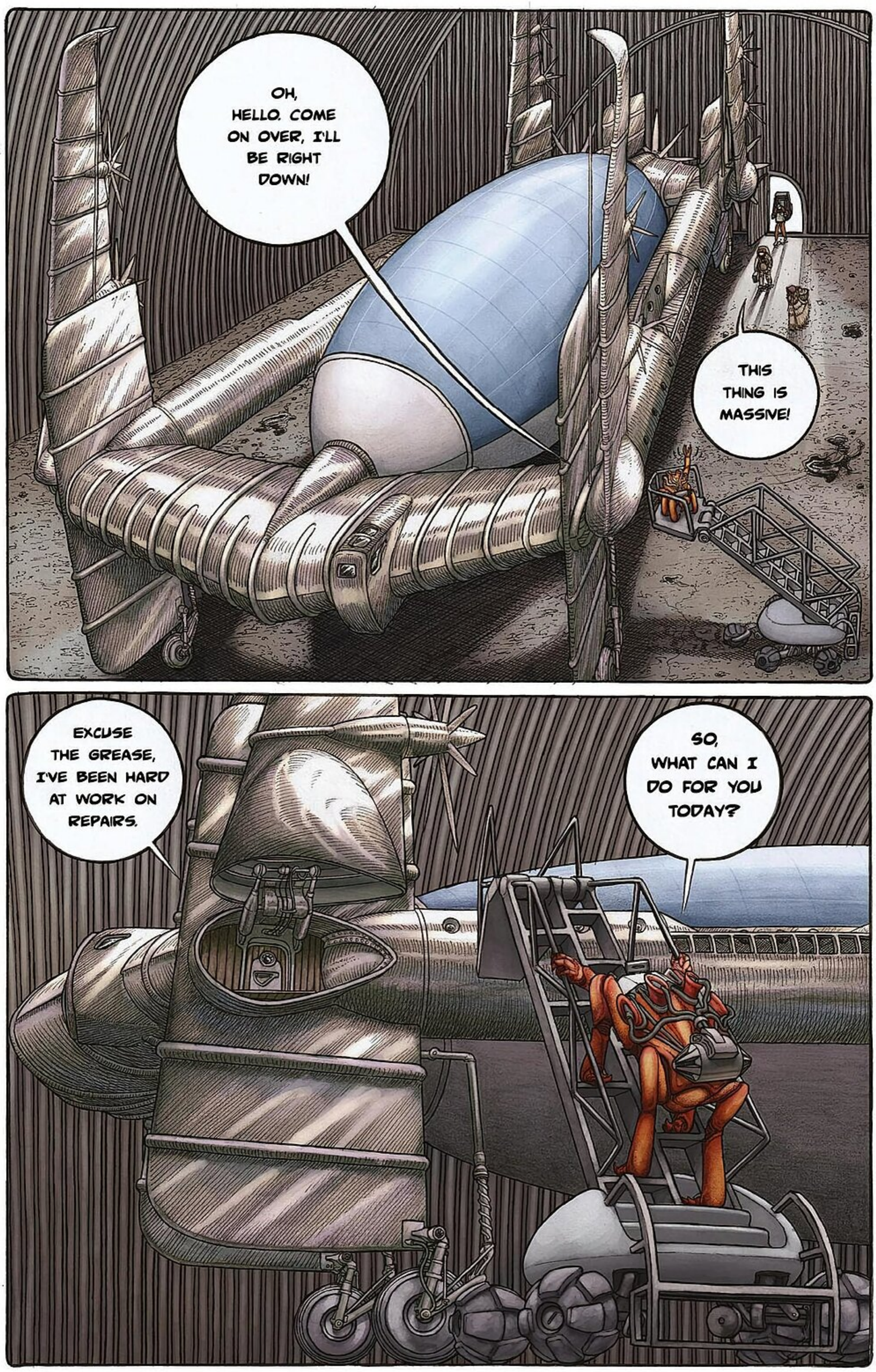
...IS THIS THING INTELLIGENT ?

WHA- OH YES. IT'S A PEKT...

...IT'S VERY RARE TO SEE THEM OUT OF WATER THOUGH...

...COME ON, CATCH UP.

AY, AERONAUT. ARE YOU IN?


OH, HELLO. COME ON OVER, I'LL BE RIGHT DOWN!
THIS THING IS MASSIVE!
EXCUSE THE GREASE, I'VE BEEN HARD AT WORK ON REPAIRS.
SO, WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU TODAY?

...IS THAT...

YES, IT'S A BREIMHEINIAN, LIKE THE DEAD ONE YOU SAW BACK ON THE SHIP.

BUT, LOSTÉ, AN ENTIRE SPECIES SHOULD NOT BE TARRED WITH THE SAME BRUSH.

YOU'RE RIGHT.

I'M SURE. I WON'T BE COMING BACK HERE AGAIN, I'M SURE.

HMM... TOSS IN THAT DROID AND YOU HAVE YOURSELF A DEAL.

FINE, LET IT BE DONE.

HAH! A PLEASURE DOING BUSINESS WITH YOU, CHANTAUR!! I'LL HAVE SOME OF THE TOWN'S GUARDS SEIZE YOUR CARAVAN.

YOU MAY HAVE THE BIO KEY UPON OUR SAFE ARRIVAL IN PELION.

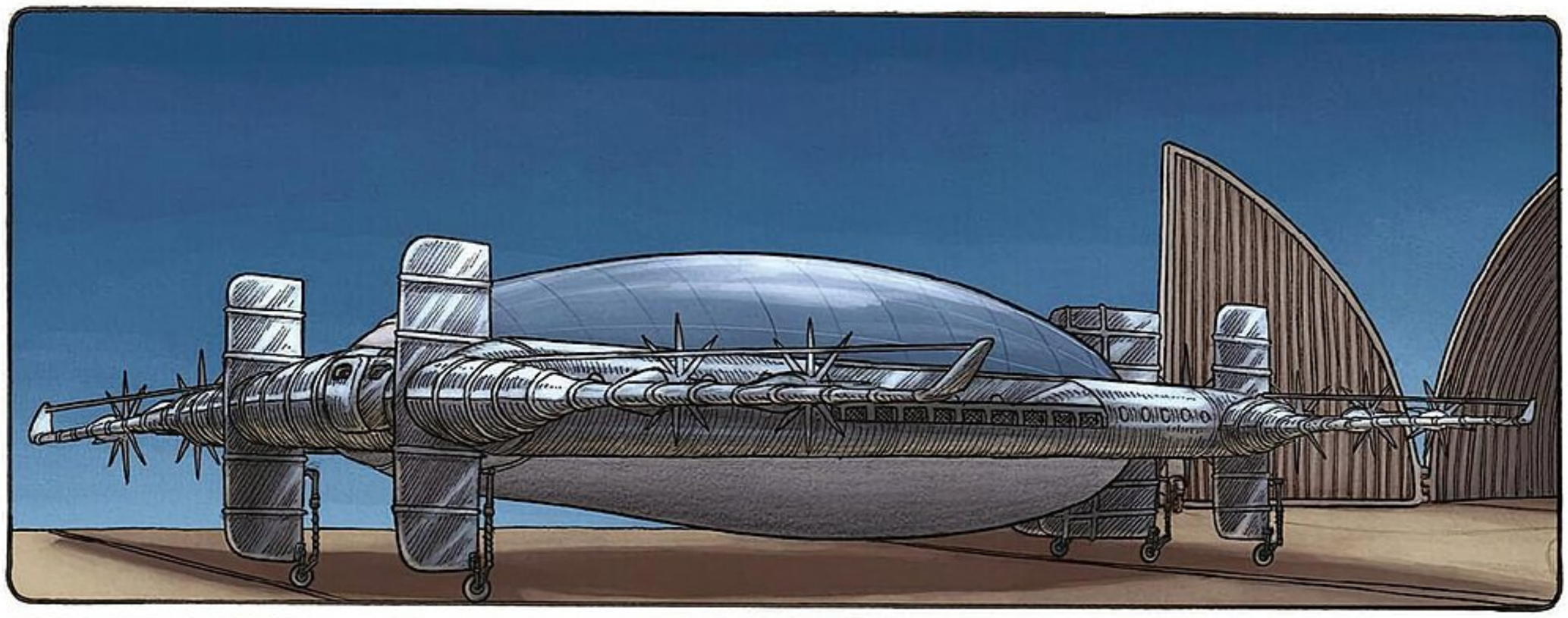
WE'D LIKE TO PURCHASE A FLIGHT ABOARD YOUR AIRSHIP TO THE RINGED CITY.

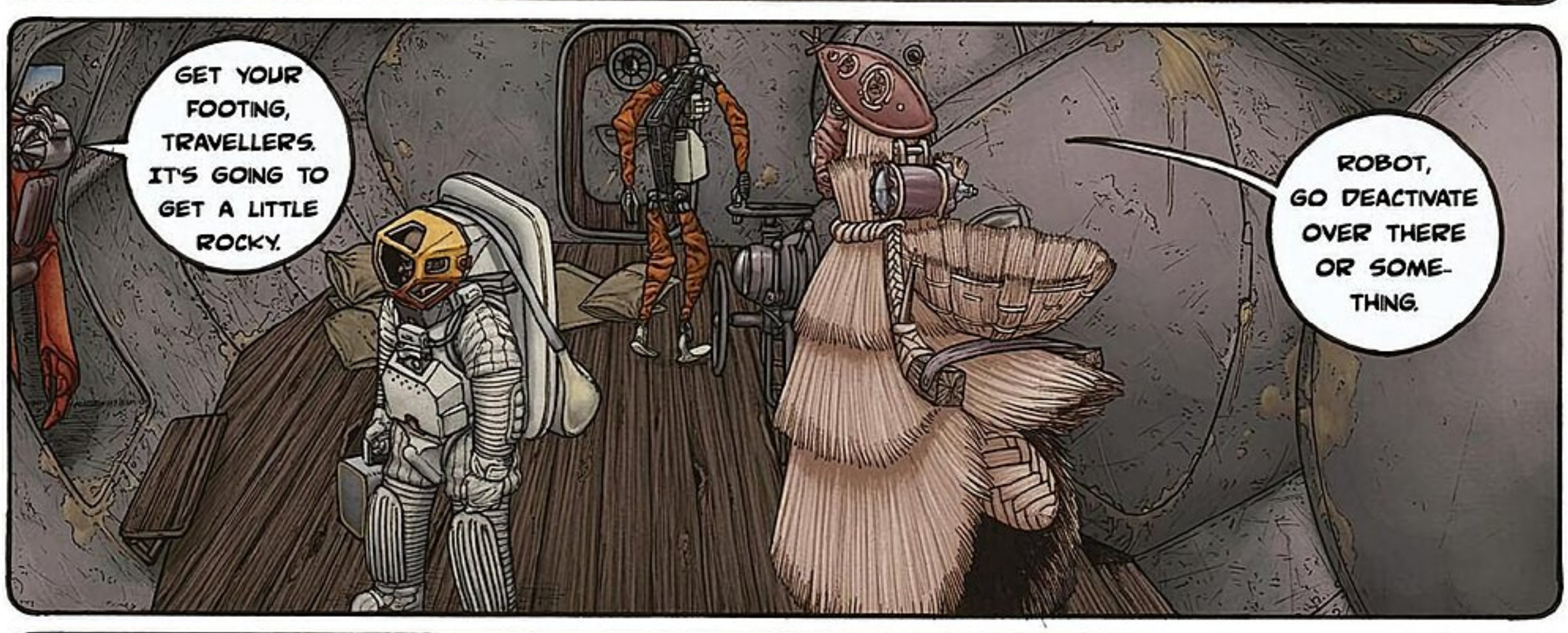
PELION? ALRIGHT, BUT THAT'S QUITE THE TRIP, IT'S GOING TO COST YOU SOME.

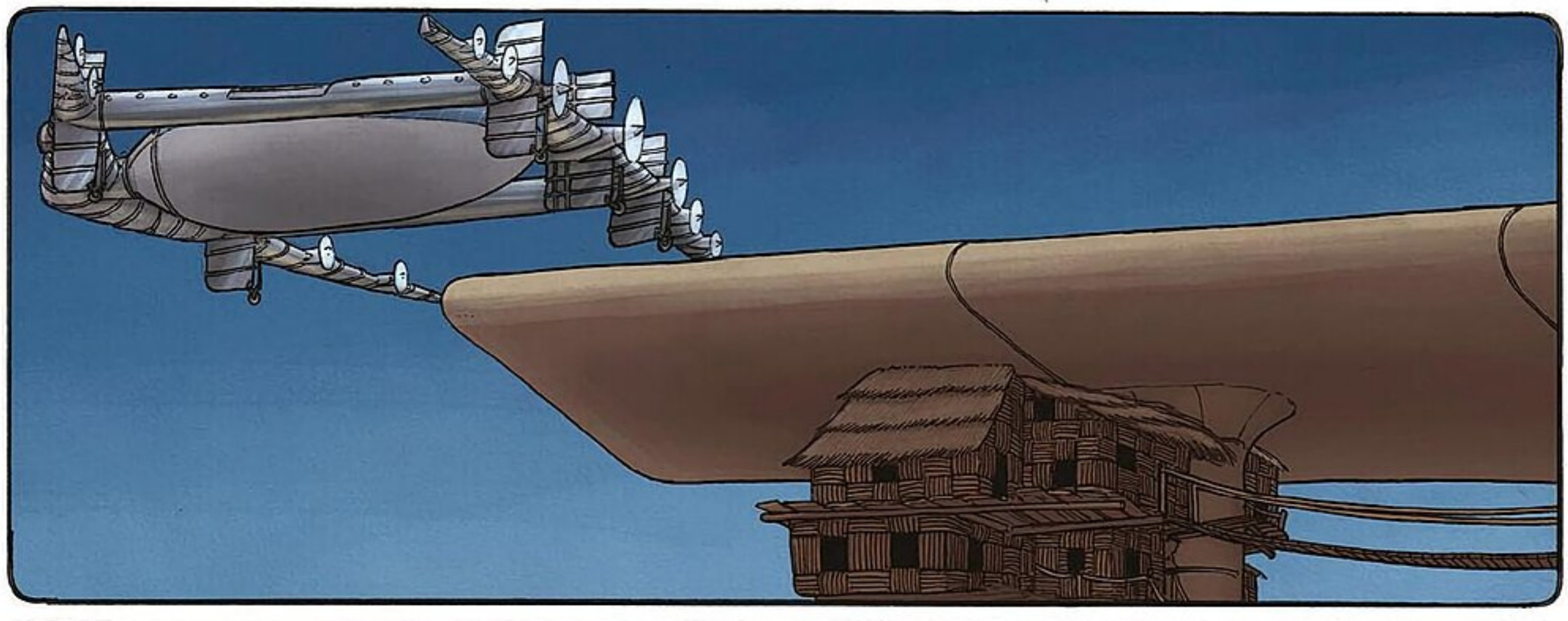
I KNOW. YOU MAY HAVE MY CARAVAN AND SOME USEFUL PARTS FOR REPAIRS.

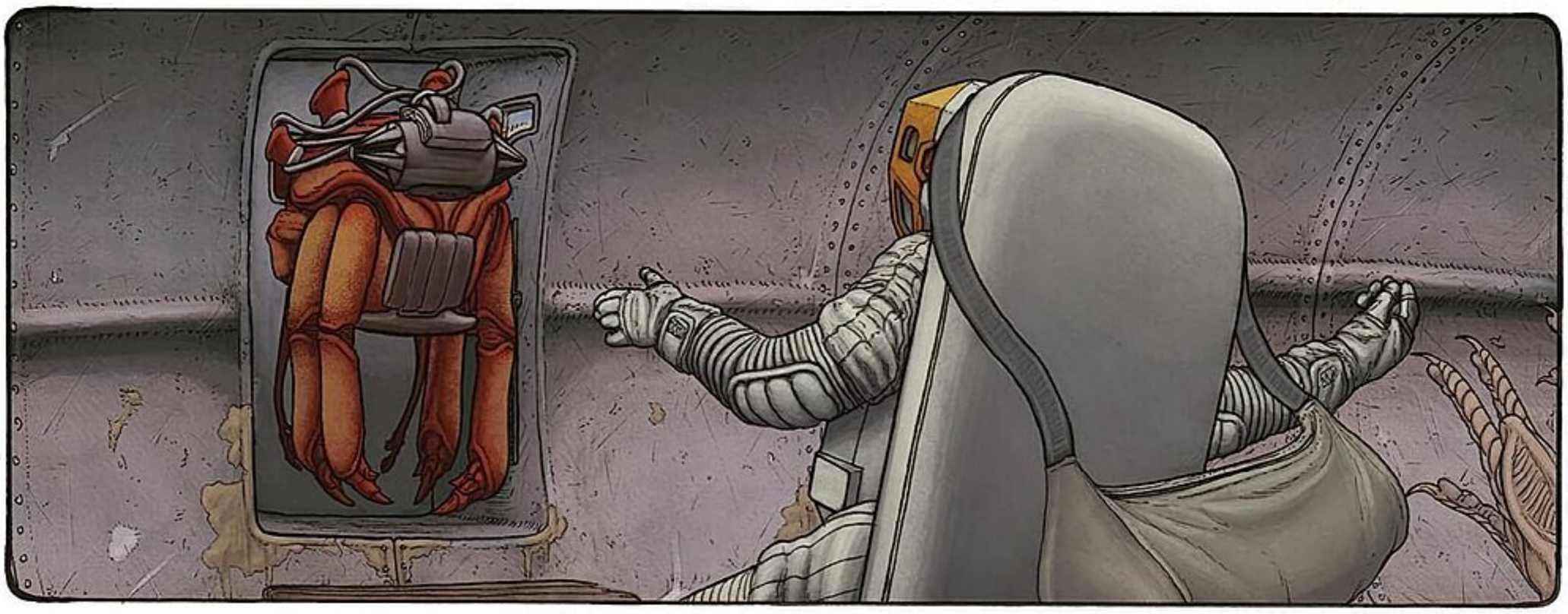
THE SAIL STRIDER? ARE YOU SURE?

MIND YOUR HEAD AS YOU COME IN, TRAVELLERS.




GET YOUR FOOTING, TRAVELLERS. IT'S GOING TO GET A LITTLE ROCKY.
ROBOT, GO DEACTIVATE OVER THERE OR SOME-THING.





I'VE GOT YOU, ENDLING!

GRAB

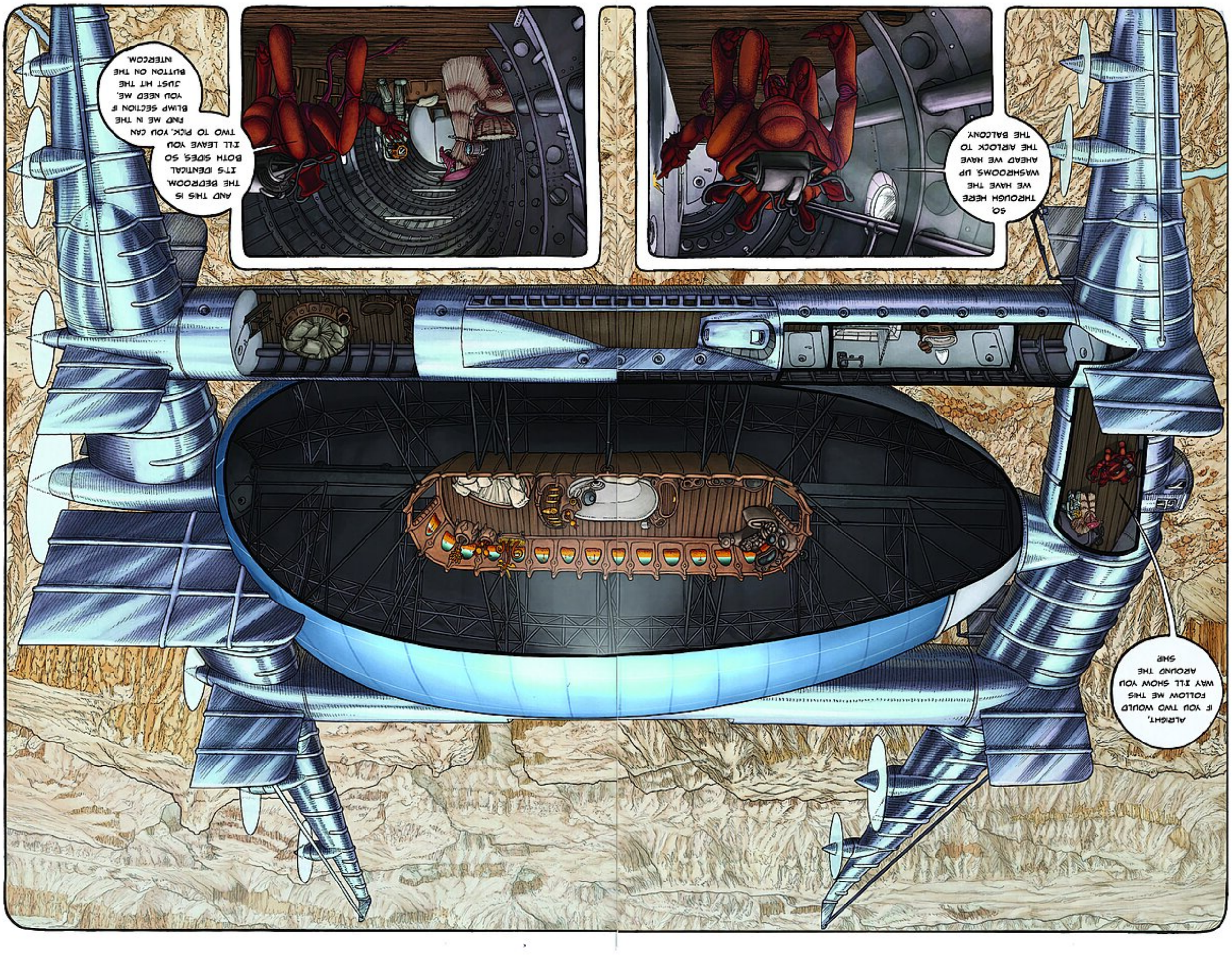
THANKS!

SORRY ABOUT THAT RICKETY TAKEOFF, I REALLY SHOULD INSTALL SOME HAND RAILS OR SEATS OR SOMETHING. ANYHOW, NOW THAT WE'RE AIRBORNE THE COMPUTER CAN FLY THE REST OF THE WA-

-GET YOUR HANDS OFF THAT VALVE! YOU'LL DEPRESSURISE THE BLIMP!

OH, SORRY!

NOT TO WORRY, NO HARM DONE. THE ATMOSPHERE OF MY HOME WORLD ACTS AS LIFTING GAS HERE ON CHIRON. SO THE ENTIRE BLIMP SECTION OF THE AIRCRAFT IS MY VERY OWN LITTLE PIECE OF HOME.


SO, THROUGH HERE WE HAVE THE WASHROOMS. UP AHEAD WE HAVE THE AIRLOCK TO THE BALCONY.
AND THIS IS THE BEDROOM. IT'S IDENTICAL BOTH SIDES, SO I'LL LEAVE YOU TWO TO PICK. YOU CAN FIND ME IN THE BLIMP SECTION IF YOU NEED ME. JUST HIT THE BUTTON ON THE INTERCOM.
ALRIGHT, IF YOU TWO WOULD FOLLOW ME THIS WAY I'LL SHOW YOU AROUND THE SHIP

LATER.

UE

UE

CLICK

LIQUID PROCESSED.

LOSTÉ, ARE YOU OKAY?

I'M EXHAUSTED, I'M GOING TO SEE IF THIS SUITS INFLATABLE HAB IS STILL OPERATIONAL. I CAN'T SLEEP ANOTHER NIGHT IN THIS THING.

...THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEANT.

SLURP SLURP

DAMNIT, I'M RUNNING LOW ON FOOD CAPSULES.

OH, I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT I'M FEELING RIGHT NOW TO BE HONEST.

WE CAN TALK ABOUT IT IF YOU WANT.

I JUST WANT MY OLD LIFE BACK. ALL OF THIS IS JUST INSANE, I STILL HAVEN'T TAKEN IT ALL IN YET.

PEOPLE DON'T BOARD INTERSTELLAR FLIGHTS WITH THE INTENTION OF EVER GOING BACK TO THEIR OLD LIVES. IT'S A ONE-WAY TRIP...

...WHEN YOU BOARDED THE U.E. BELFAST YOU KNEW YOU WERE NEVER GOING TO SEE THE WORLD YOU KNEW AGAIN.

WOW, GREAT PEP TALK, BELFAST.

I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TRYING TO SAY, AND THIS ISN'T THE SAME. I KNEW THERE WAS AT LEAST GOING TO BE OTHER PEOPLE WHEN I ARRIVED AT CHIRON...

THAT'S NOT- I WAS JUST TRYING TO SAY THAT...

A NEW LIFE, NEW FRIENDS. I DON'T EVEN KNOW IF I BELIEVE THIS IS ALL REALLY HAPPENING OR NOT. IT ALL FEELS SO CLOUDY.

THERE ARE OTHER PEOPLE HERE, THEY'RE JUST NOT... HUMAN. YOU CAN MAKE THIS WORK, THERE IS SO MUCH OUT THERE FOR YOU TO SE-

THE HUMAN RACE IS EXTINCT AND WHAT REMAINS OF HUMANITY...

...IS EVEN MORE ALIEN TO ME THAN WHATEVER THE HELL WAS BACK THERE...

...I'M ALONE.

YOU'RE NOT ALONE IN THIS, I'M HERE.

YOU'RE A MACHINE!

...

BELFAST... I'M SORRY, I DIDN'T MEAN THAT. I KNOW YOU'RE NOT-

IT'S OKAY.

NO, IT'S NOT OKAY. YOU'RE LITERALLY ALL I HAVE LEFT FROM THE OLD WORLD. I SHOULD BE THANKFUL YOU'RE HERE WITH ME.

LOSTÉ, IT'S OKAY, REALLY.

GET SOME REST, YOU MUST BE EXHAUSTED.

THE RINGED CITY OF PELION

ENDLING, WAKE UP.

COME TO THE BALCONY, YOU CAN SEE THE WHOLE CITY FROM HERE!

UGH... WHA-?

WELCOME TO THE RINGED CITY OF PELION.

WAIT, PELION? I KNOW THAT NAME... I WAS GOING TO BE STATIONED HERE.

YES, THE NAME STAYED BUT THE INVADERS DIDN'T... BUT YOU ALREADY KNOW THAT, OF COURSE.

WHY DOES IT LOOK LIKE THAT?

THREE CONCENTRIC IMPACT CRATERS WERE FORMED WHEN DEICIDE LOWERED THE ASTROID DOWN TO THE SURFACE.

THE REFUGEES FLEEING FROM THE IMPERIUM HUDDLED AROUND THIS MONOLITH. A TIERED CITY ESTABLISHED ITSELF WITHIN THE RINGS.

THREE RINGS DOWN HERE ON CHIRON AND ANOTHER THREE UP THERE AT THE TIP OF THE SPACE ELEVATOR. THIS RINGED CITY QUICKLY BECAME THE SECRET CAPITAL OF THE GALACTIC UNION. DEICIDE MADE HIS HOME ATOP THIS ROCK, AND THE HIDDEN BASE OF OPERATIONS FOR HIS RESISTANCE AGAINST THE ALL-MOTHER WAS FORMED.

OUTSTANDING!

TRAVELLERS, PLEASE RETURN INSIDE.

...WE ARE ON OUR APPROACH TO THE LANDING STRIP.

THANK YOU, BREIMHEINIAN. AS PROMISED, YOUR PAYMENT. MAYBE BUY SOME CLOTHES WITH IT.

HEH HEH. FUNNY ONE. THANK YOU FOR YOUR BUSINESS, I WISH YOU SAFE TRAVELS.

WHAT THE...

GREETINGS, LOSTÉ, MY NAME IS UTHIPIDUS...

...I AM DEICIDE'S RIGHT HAND...

...I AM HERE TO TAKE YOU TO HIM.

OKAY, BUT THE CHANTAURI COMES WITH ME. THEY'VE GOT ME THIS FAR.

VERY WELL, THIS WAY.

CHANTAURI, HOLD ON A MOMENT.

SO GROSS!

GROSS!

THE ATMOSPHERE INSIDE THE ATTACK BOAT IS POISONOUS TO YOUR KND.

TAKE THIS MASK.

THANK YOU.

THIS WAY, YOUR GRACE.

PLEASE ATTACH TO THE WALL, WE'RE ABOUT TO JUMP.

LIKE THIS?

CHANTAURI, JUST LEAVE YOUR BACKPACK ON THE FLOOR. THE SHIP FOR HOLD IT IN PLACE.

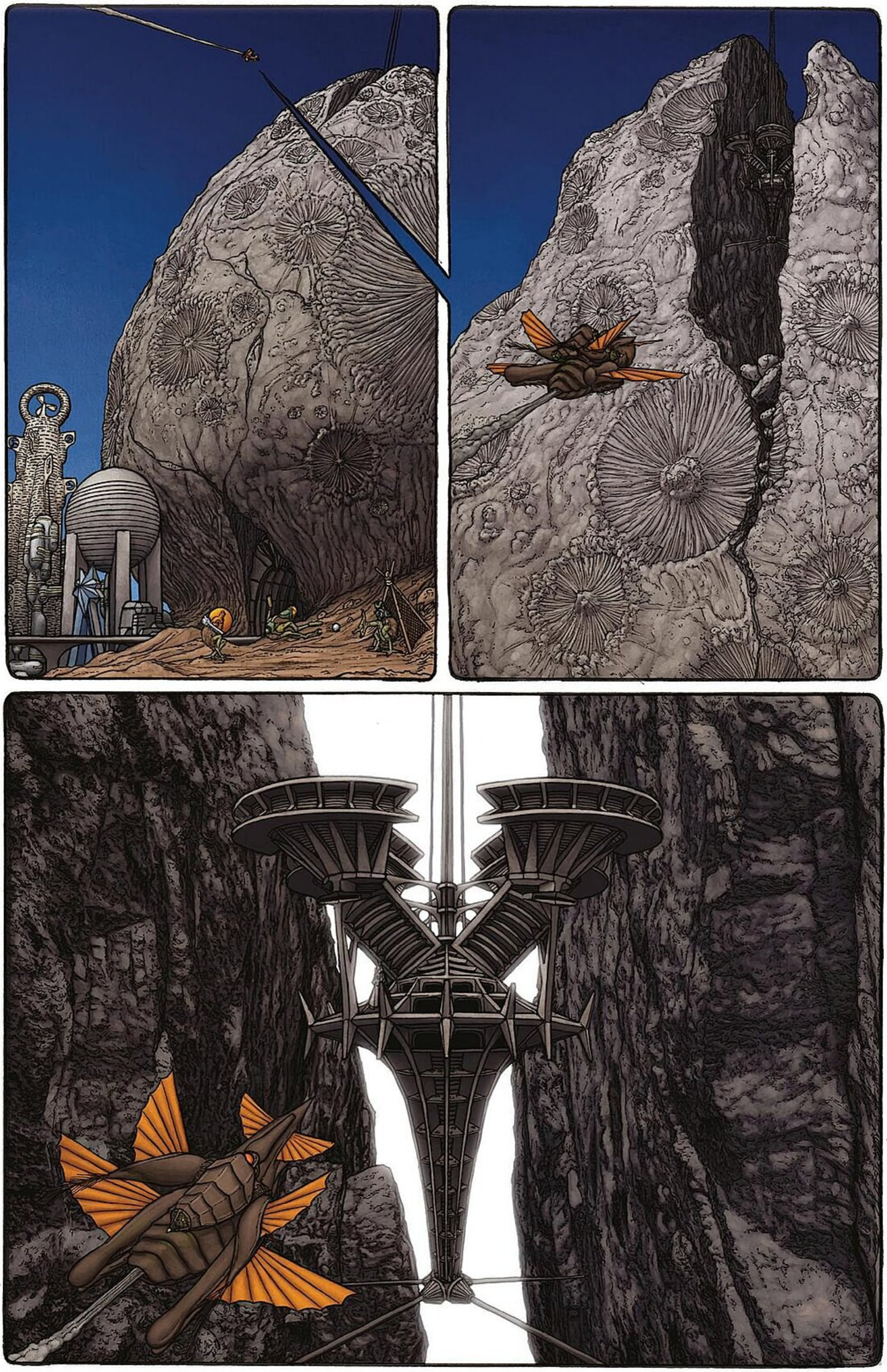
ALRIGHT.

THE SHIP IS FASCINATED BY YOUR SUIT.

HEHE, THIS TICKLES!

THIS IS AMAZING, ISN'T IT?

UH... THAT'S ONE WORD FOR IT.



LOSTÉ, YOU'RE HERE!

THIS IS IMPORTANT, I WILL BE BACK SHORTLY.

I HAVE NO DOUBT ABOUT THAT, BUT THIS IS THE ONE I WAS TELLING THE COUNCIL ABOUT... THE KEY TO WINNING THE WAR. I WON'T BE A MOMENT.

WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

SHORTLY? THIS REQUIRES YOUR IMMEDIATE ATTENTION. WE'VE JUST DISCOVERED AN ANOMALY IN HIGH ORBIT.

TRANSCHIRONIAN INJECTION.

PHILYRA

DEFENSIVE FLEET

ANOMALY

WE MUST MOBILISE THE ENTIRE FLEET IMMEDIATELY.

KRAKENS! IMPERIUM KRAKENS HAVE ENTERED OUR SPACE THROUGH THE ANOMALY!

WE NEED A DEFENSIVE BLOCKADE IN LOW CHIRONIAN ORBIT TO ALLOW THEM TO ESCAPE.

CHIRON

MIDCOURSE CORRECTION

ANOMALY INTERCEPTION TRAJECTORY.

WARP BUS FLEET

CHIRONIAN ORBIT

GOOD GODS, THIS IS IT!

I'LL CALL IN ADDITIONAL SHIPS FROM PHILYRA. PLOTTING COURSE NOW... OKAY, IT'S ON SCREEN.

DEFENSIVE FLEET ORBITAL PATH

AND WHAT OF THE GROUND ASSAULT? I FEAR IT IS FRIVOLOUS TO DEFEND THE OUTER RINGS.

YES, I AGREE. ALL FORCES MUST CONGREGATE AROUND DEICIDE AND HIS PROTECTEE. WE SHOULD BOLSTER OUR DEFENCES AROUND THE INNER RING AND THE ELEVATOR.

YES, I WILL ORGANISE FOR A WARP BUS TO WAIT IN ORBIT FOR THEM.

ADDITIONAL WARP BUSES WILL ALLOW FOR SOME CIVILIANS TO ESCAPE.

LOSTÉ, I'M SO GLAD YOU MADE IT.

YOU WILL BE SAFE NOW, REST ASSURED.

AND YOU MUST BE HIS PROTECTOR, I CANNOT THANK YOU ENOUGH FOR BRINGING HIM TO ME.

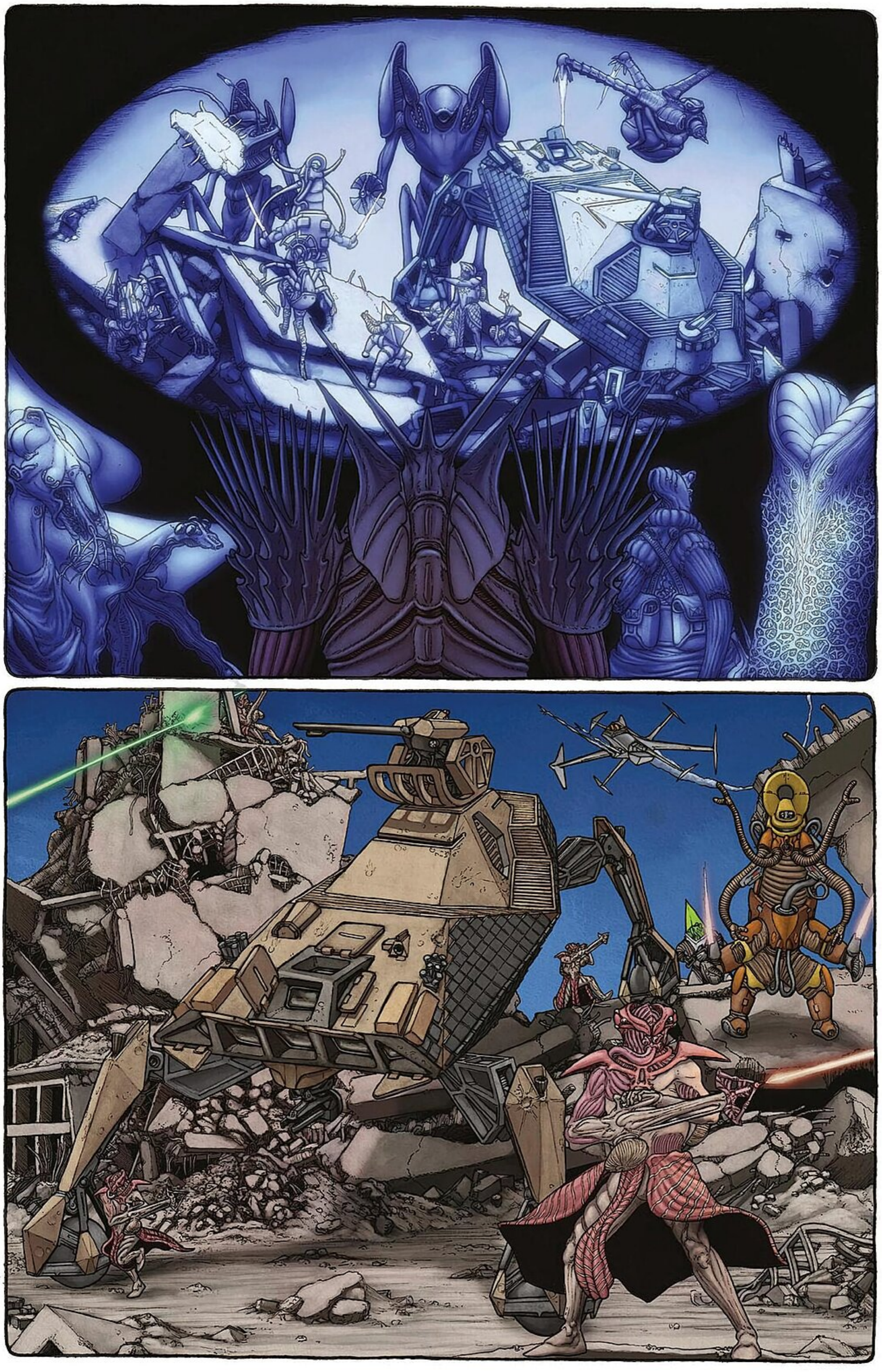
I WISH WE HAD TIME TO TALK, BUT THE IMPERIUM IS HERE AND THE CITY IS UNDER SIEGE.

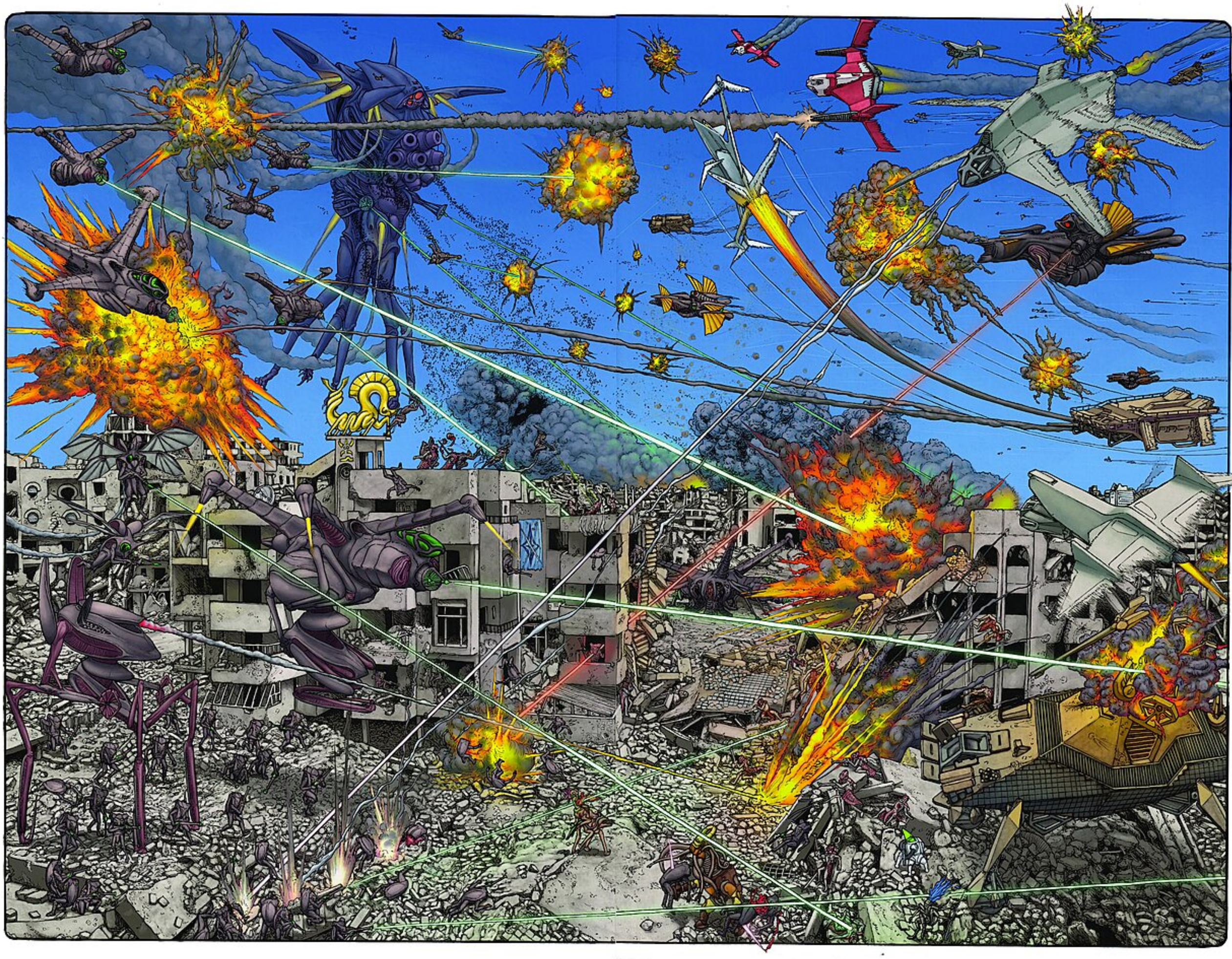
UTHIPIDUS, TAKE THEM TO THE SHIP. I'LL BE THERE SOON, I JUST HAVE TO ORGANISE OUR DEPARTURE.

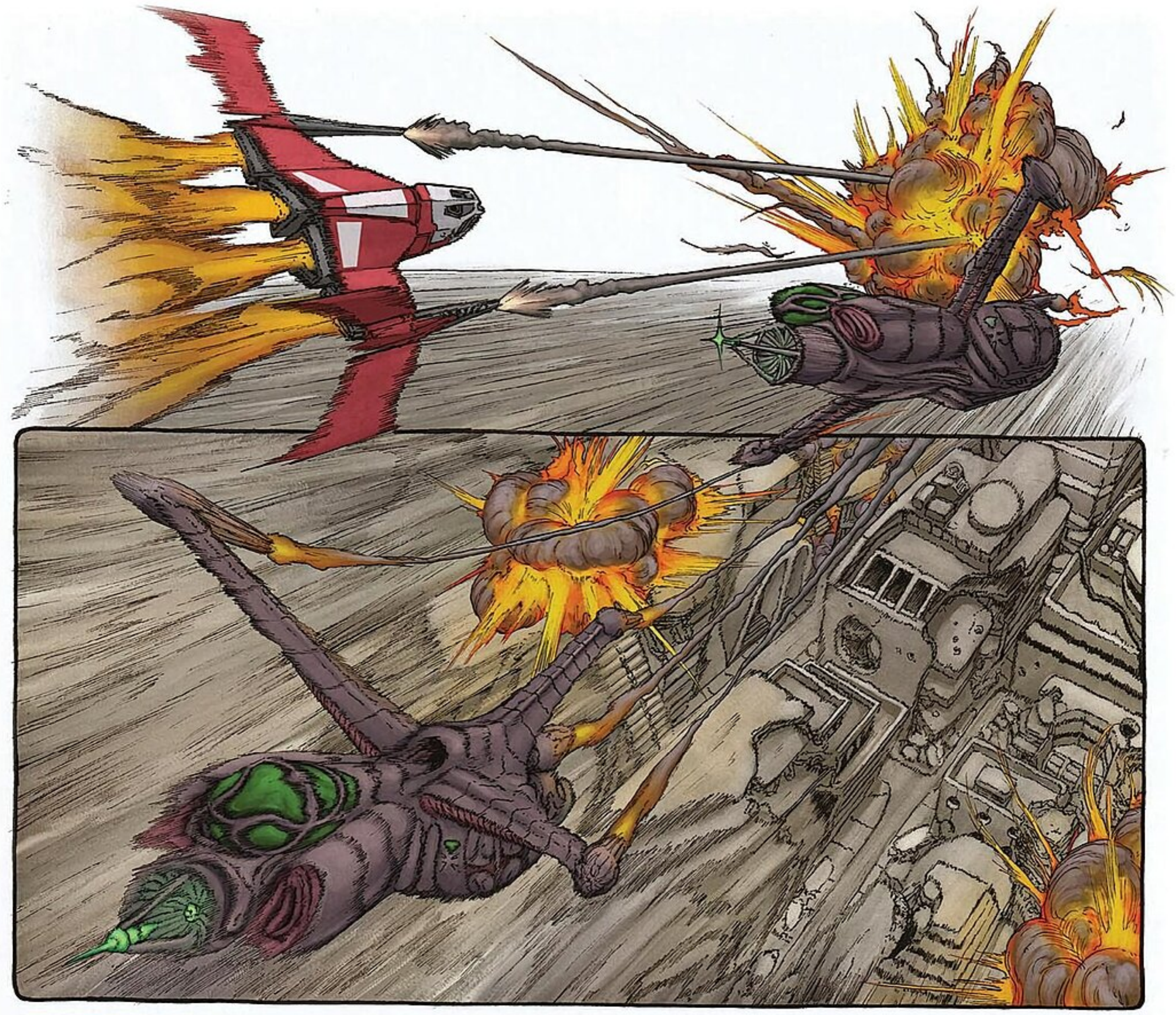
IMPERIUM TRIPODS SPOTTED WITHIN THE INNER RING!

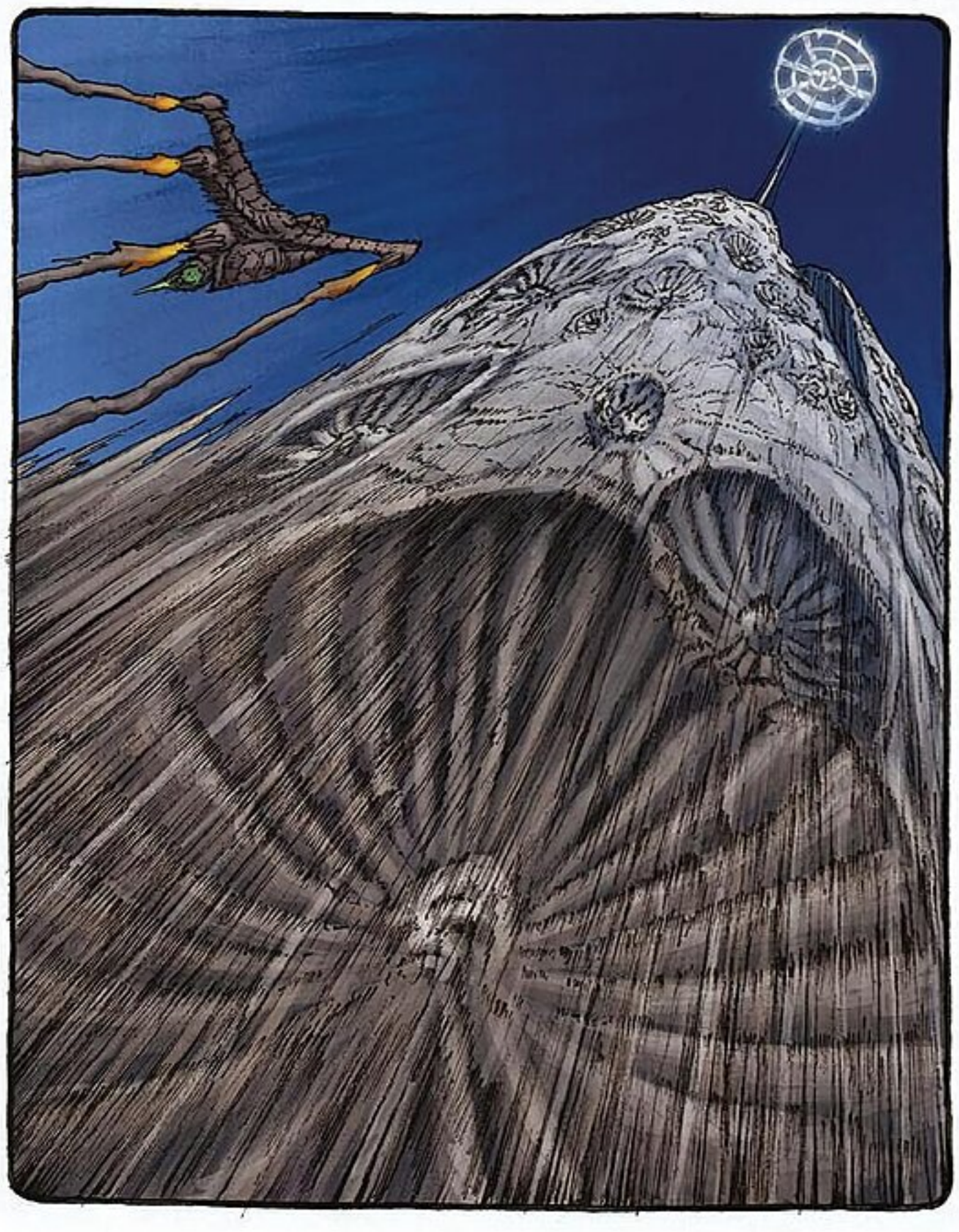
SHOW ME.

ON SCREEN NOW, SIR.



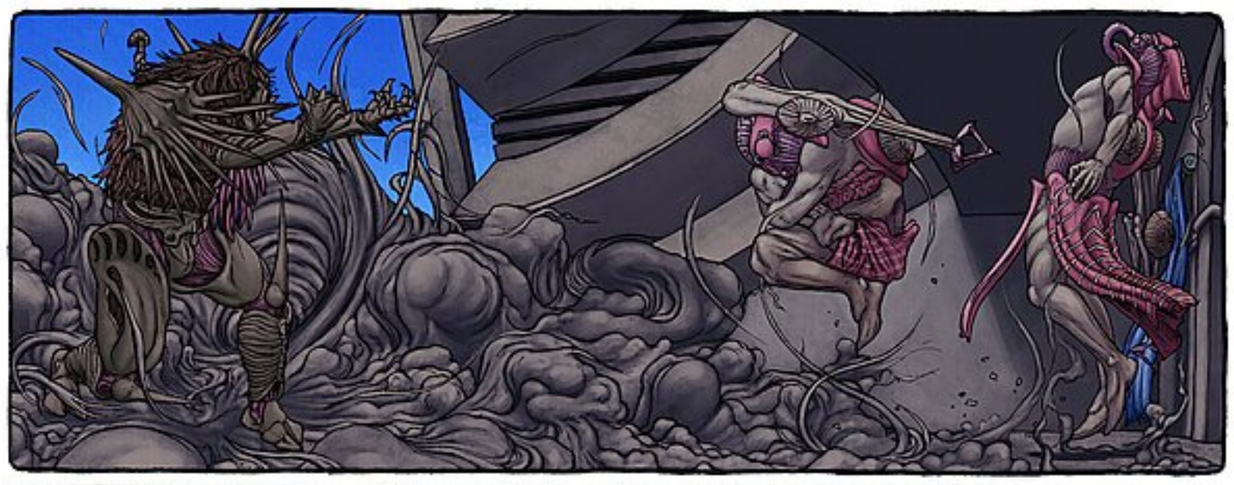


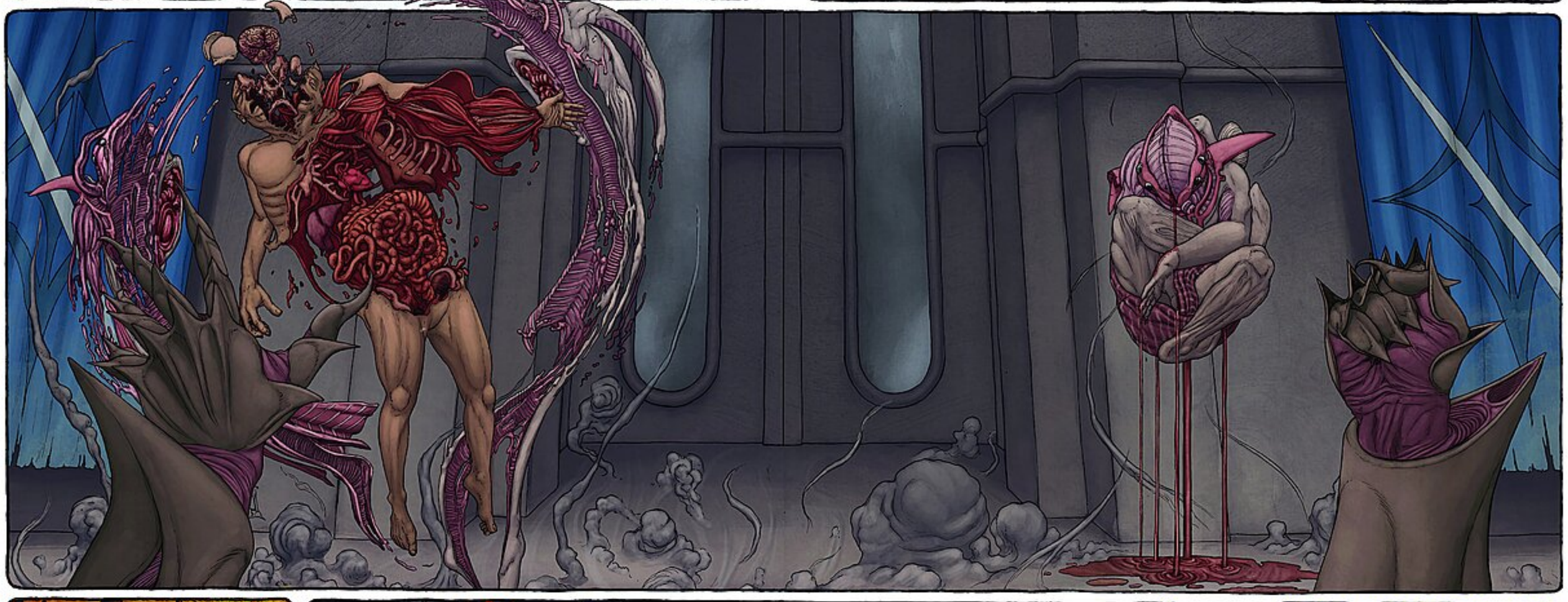




MEN, GUARD LOSTÉ AND THE CHANTAURI. I HAVE TO DEAL WITH THIS.

YES, SIR!





TRAITOR!

OUGHRGADD?!

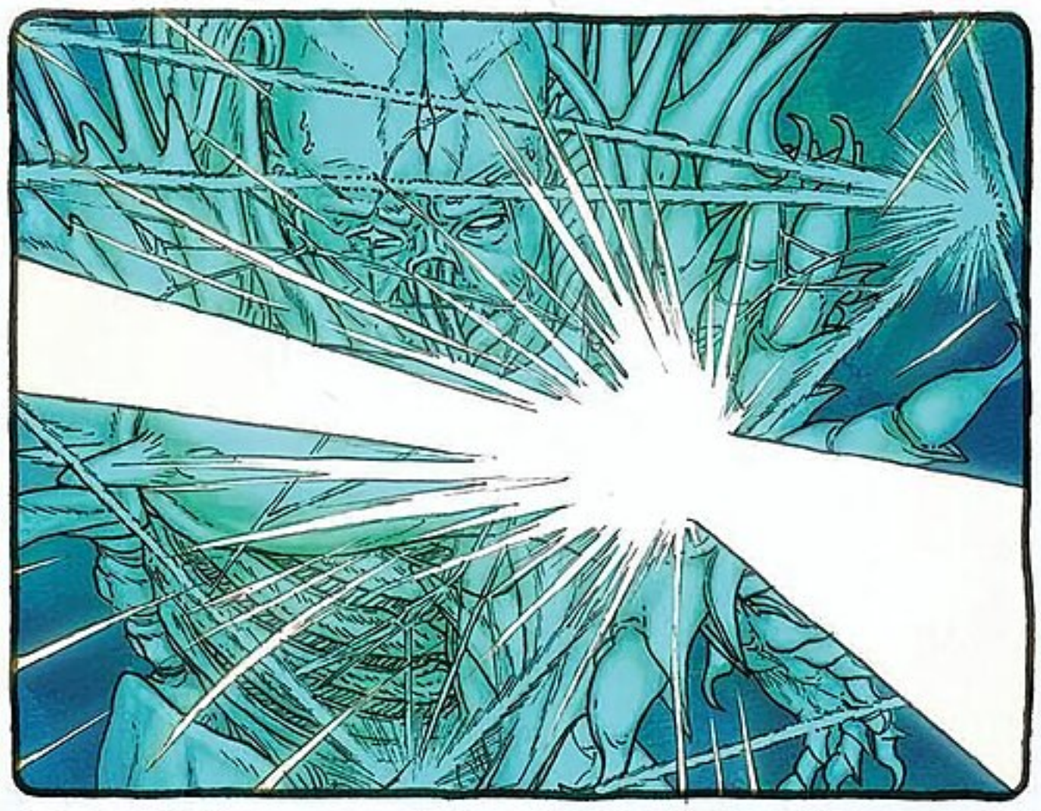
BROTHER, HOW DID YO-

YOU ARE NO BROTHER OF MINE!

WHERE IS IT?

WHERE IS THE ENDLING?!

IF YOU KNEW WHAT IT TRULY WAS, YOU WOULDN'T BE ATTACKING ME, BROTHER.



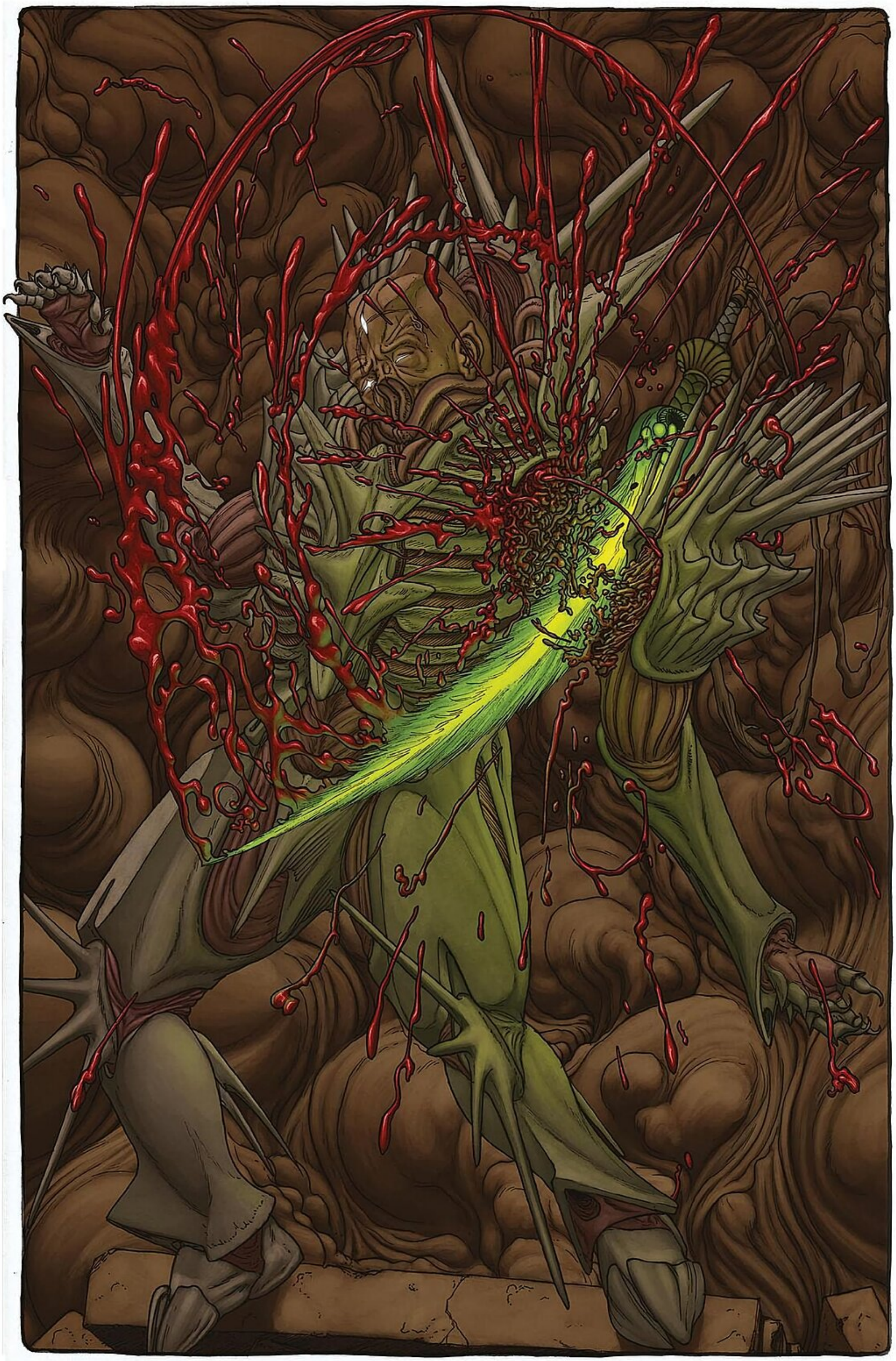
ENOUGH WITH YOUR HERESY! I WILL JUST HAVE TO KILL YOU AND FIND IT MYSELF.

!

ÇAGK!ÐAMN YOUR ÇACK! TRICKS.

I'M SORRY THAT IT HAD TO COME TO THIS, BUT YOU WOULD NOT HEAR MY WORDS.

WILL YOU LISTEN NOW?



!

EVEN IF YOU KILL ME...

IF?

...LOSTÉ'S MIND WILL REMAIN CLOAKED

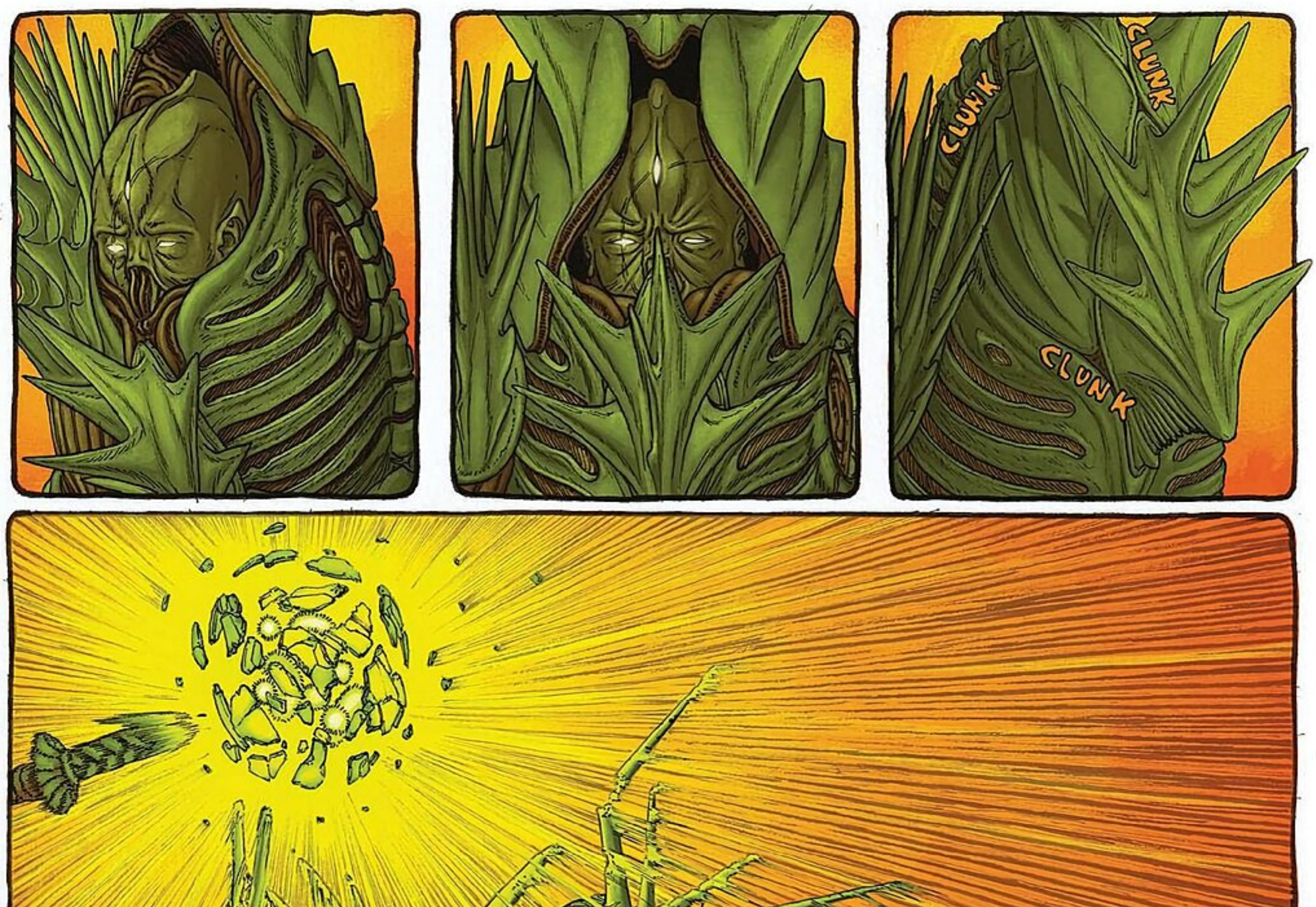
UTHIPIDUS WILL KEEP HIM HIDDEN FROM YOU.

UTHIPIDUS?

NOW, MY SON! USE MY STAFF!

?

TARGET HIS SWORDS POWER SOURCE.


CLUNK
CLUNK
CLUNK

FATHER!

FATHER, ARE YOU ALRIGHT?

I-I'M FINE, MY FACE PLATE PROTECTED ME FROM THE BRUNT OF THE BLAST.

CAN YOU STAND? WE MUST GET TO THE SHIP.

YES, YES I CAN STAND. I NEED YOU TO CARRY OUGHRIGADD.

WHAT?! NO, HE CANNOT COME WITH US!

HE MUST. I'M SURE I CAN CONVINCE HIM OF OUR CAUSE, I JUST NEED SOME TIME WITH HIM. WE NEED CONTROL OF HIS WOMB WORLD. THOSE REINFORCEMENTS WILL BE INVALUABLE.

... UNDERSTOOD. I'LL GO AND GRAB HIM NOW.

FATHER, YOUR ARM!

I-IS THAT ANOTHER OVERFATHER ?!

MY SONS, PUT OUGHRIGADD IN THE PSIONIC DEPRIVATION CHAMBER. WE CAN'T HAVE HIM ALERTING THE ALL-MOTHER OF OUR LOCATION.

YES, FATHER!

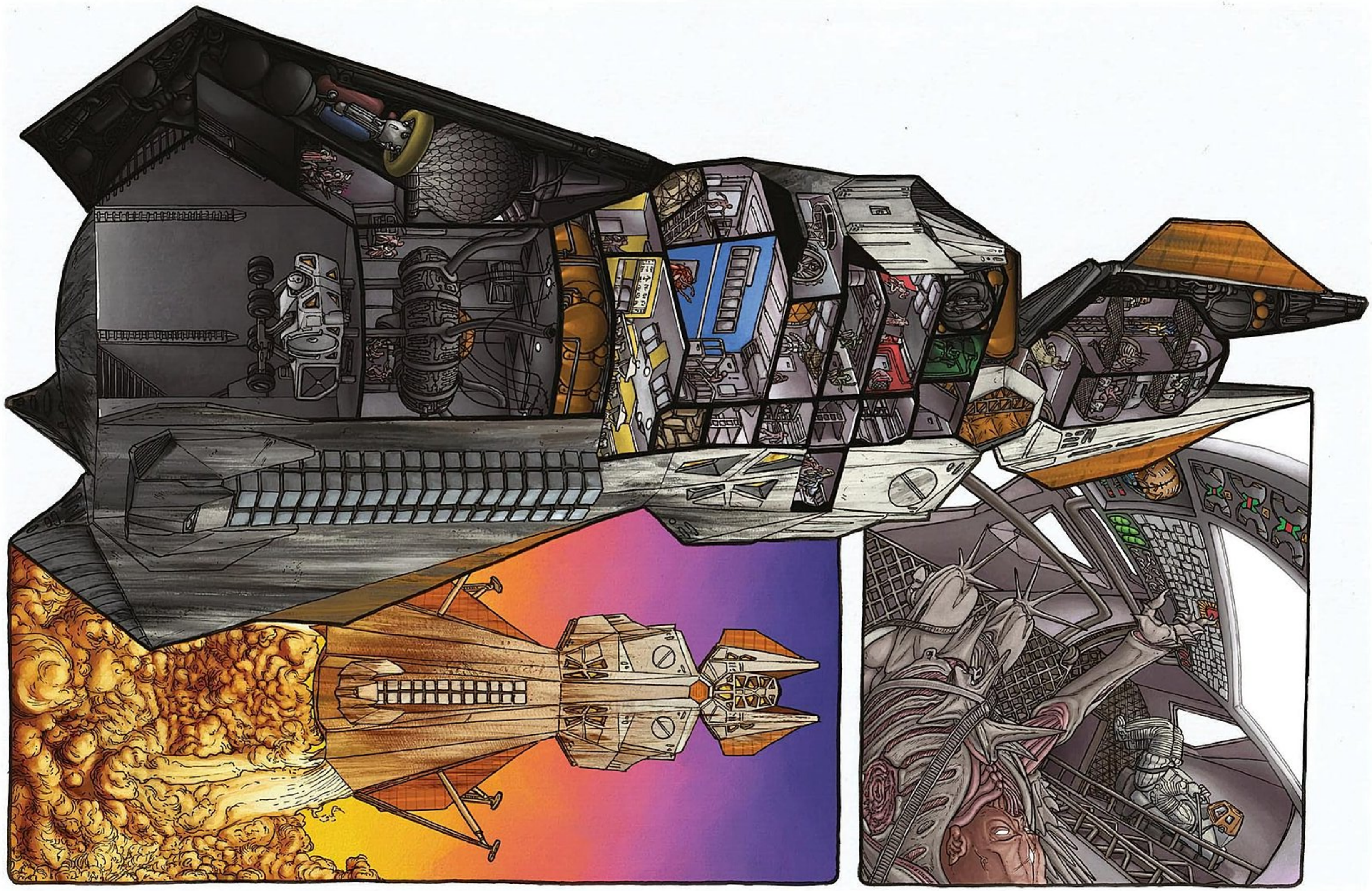
PREPARE US FOR LAUNCH.

DEICIDE, THERE IS AN IMPERIUM ANOMALOCARIS IN OUR FLIGHT PATH.

IS THERE ANY WAY WE CAN AVOID IT?

NOT IF WE WANT TO MAKE ORBIT. IT'S ON YOUR MONITOR NOW.

HMM, OKAY, I NEED TWO ROUNDS FIRED FROM THE MAG CANNON.

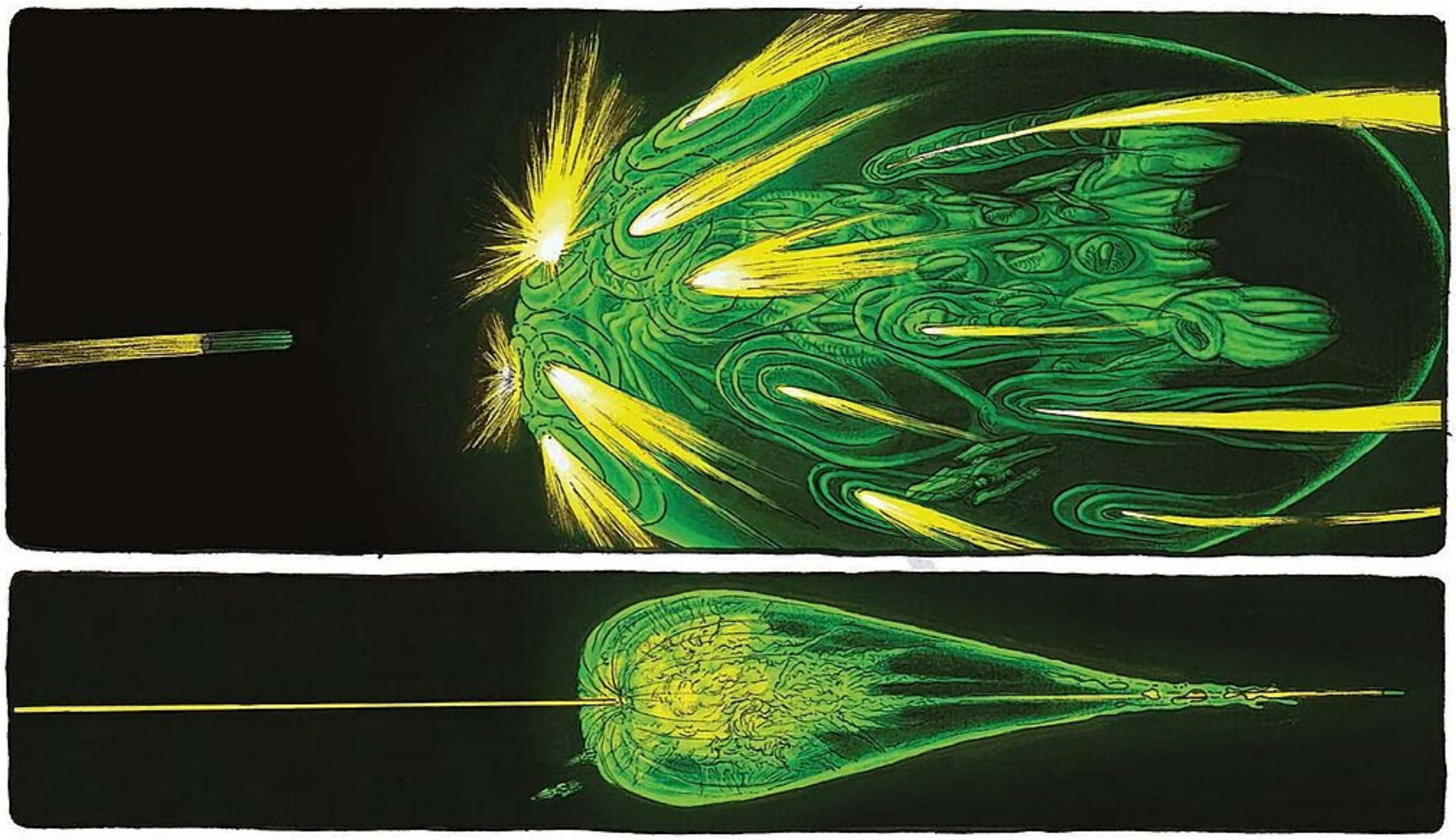


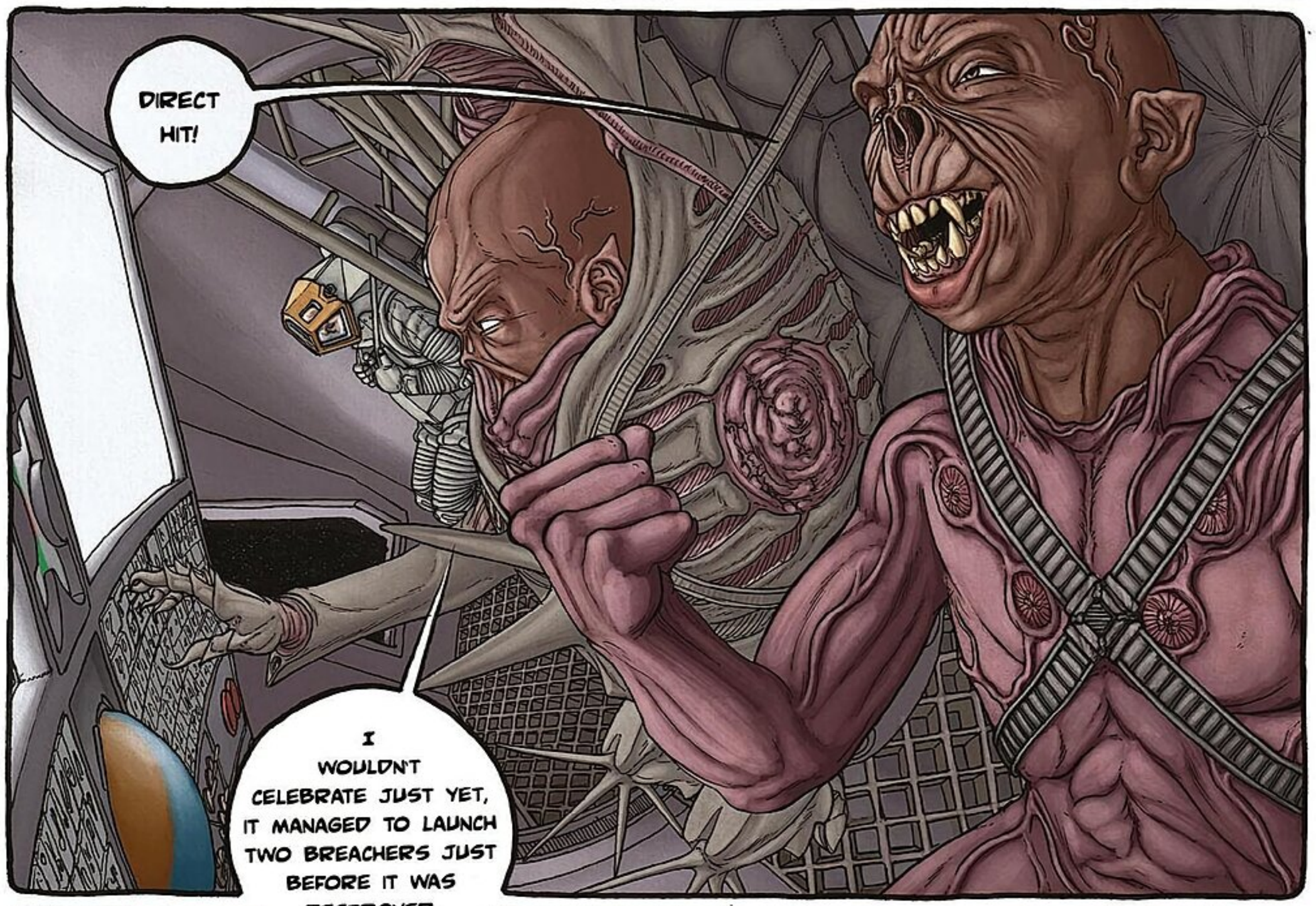
...ONE CLUSTER ROUND TO SCATTER ITS SHIELDS...

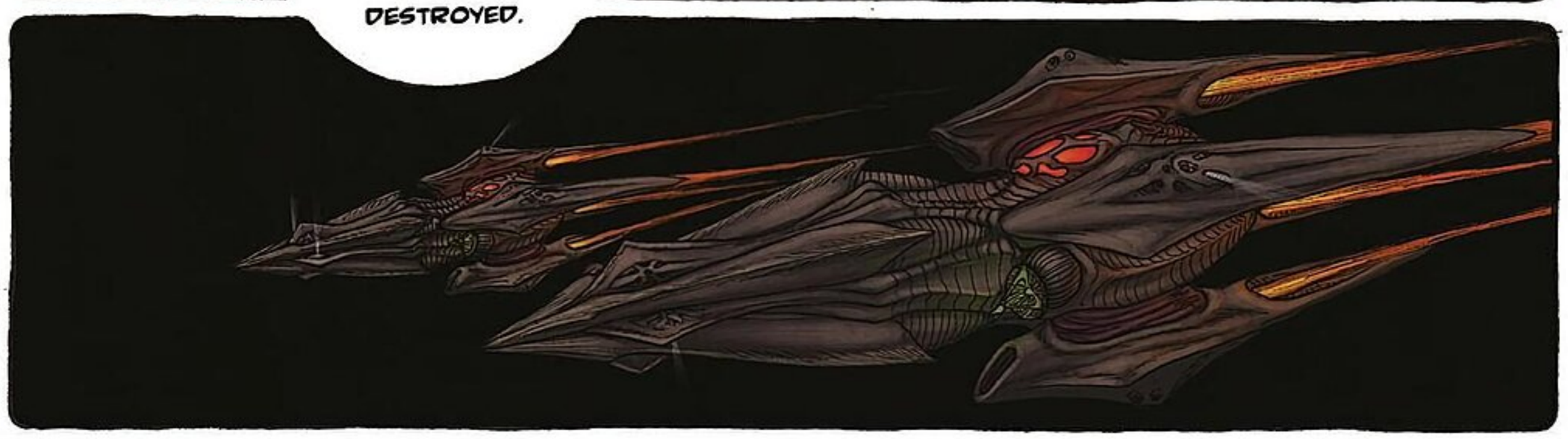
...AND TO DETERMINE WHICH DIRECTION IT IS GOING TO EVADE IN.

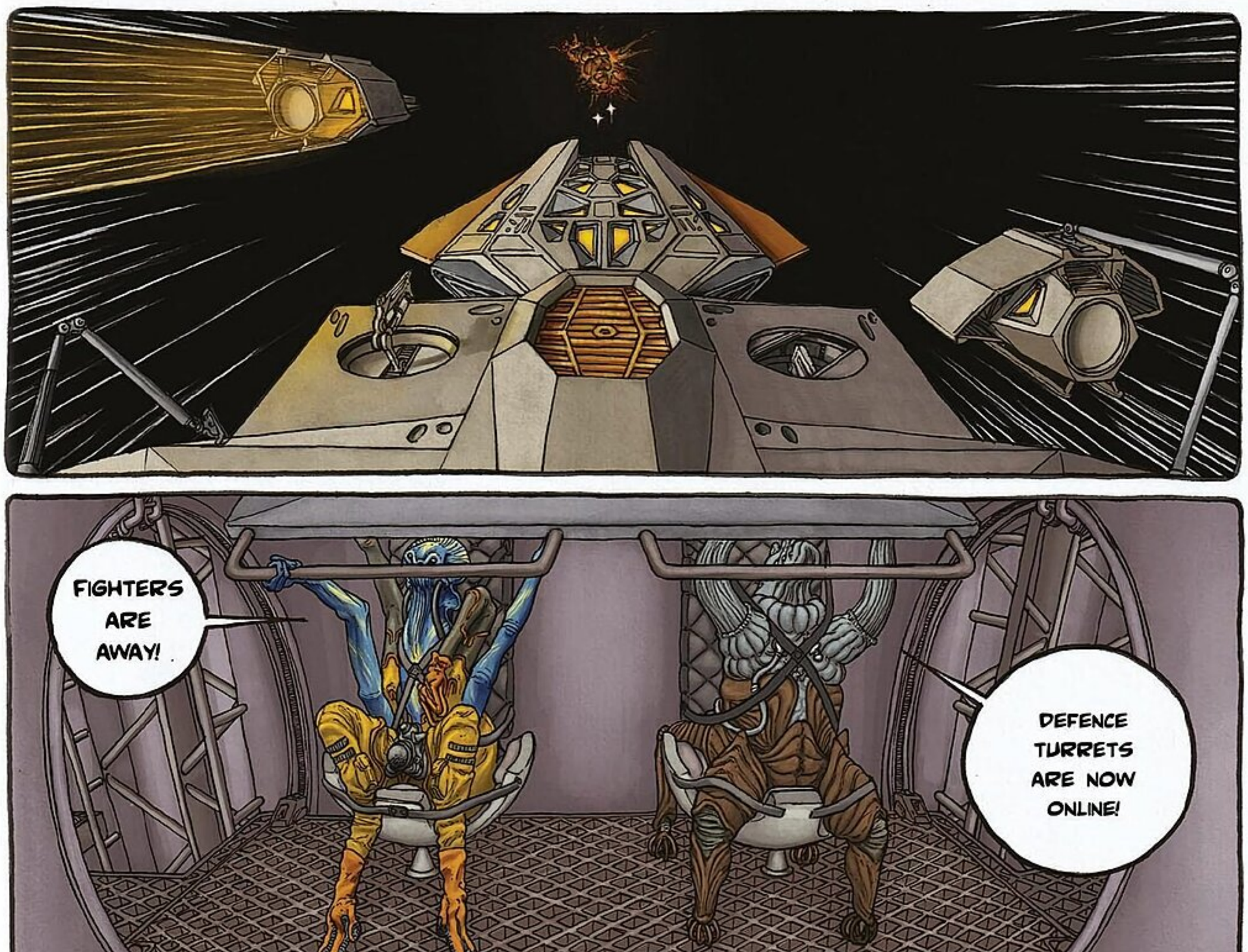
THEN A SECOND SLUG ROUND FIRED IN RAPID SUCCESSION TO HIT THE TARGET DIRECTLY.

FIRING NOW!



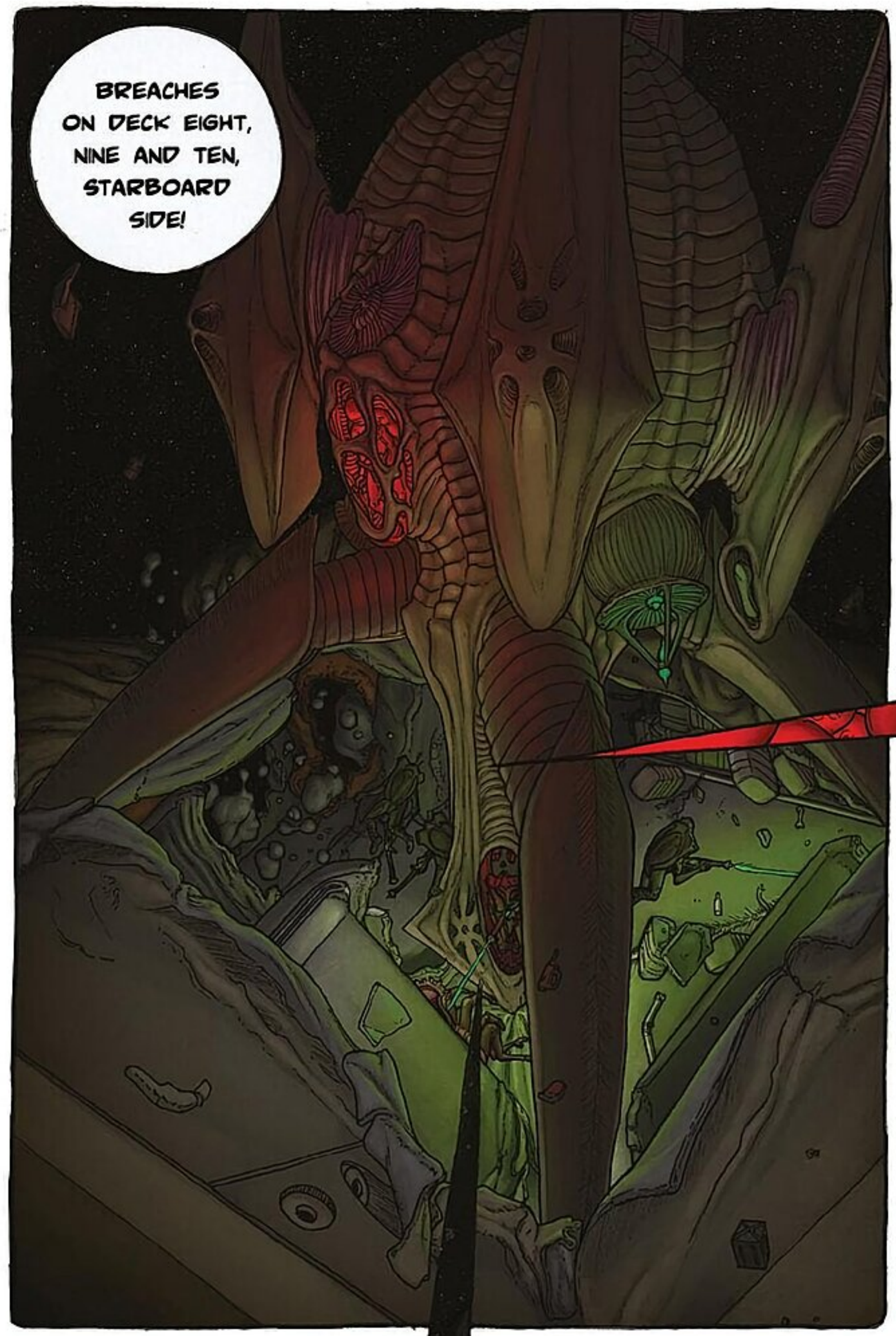

DIRECT HIT!
I WOULDN'T CELEBRATE JUST YET, IT MANAGED TO LAUNCH TWO BREACHERS JUST BEFORE IT WAS DESTROYED.




FIGHTERS ARE AWAY!
DEFENCE TURRETS ARE NOW ONLINE!
IMPERIUM BREACHERS ARE CLOSING FAST! WE CANNOT ALLOW THEM TO ATTACH TO OUR HULL.
RCS IS FULLY OPERATIONAL

THAT WAS TOO CLOSE FOR COMFORT!
TAKING THE SHOT!
ONE BREACHER DOWN!
WHAT'S THE SITUATION WITH THE OTHER BREACHER?
I'M DEAD IN THE WATER...

...MY AEROSPIKE RING HAS BEEN DESTROYED...
...THE BREACHER IS HEADING RIGHT FOR THE SHIP!
THEY'VE TAKEN OUT OUR DEFENSIVE TURRETS!
OUR FORWARD CANNONS ARE PROVING USELESS AT LANDING A HIT. WE'RE COMPLETELY OPEN!
IMPACT!


BREACHES ON DECK EIGHT, NINE AND TEN, STARBOARD SIDE!

IMPERIUM CLONES ARE APPROACHING THE BRIDGE, SIR.

WE MUST DETACH, PREPARE THE BRIDGE FOR LAUNCH.

UNDERSTOOD. CHANGING BRIDGE FORMATION AND PREPPING ENGINES.

I'LL MAN THE GUNS!

OH GOD, I HATE SPACE.

DON'T WORRY, WE'LL GET THROUGH THIS.

WE NEED TO SWING AROUND AND HIT THAT BREACHER WITH OUR FORWARD CANNONS AS QUICK AS WE CAN.

SIR, THE BREACHERS TURRET IS TAKING AIM!

EVADE!

PAK

PAK

PAK

PAK

PAK

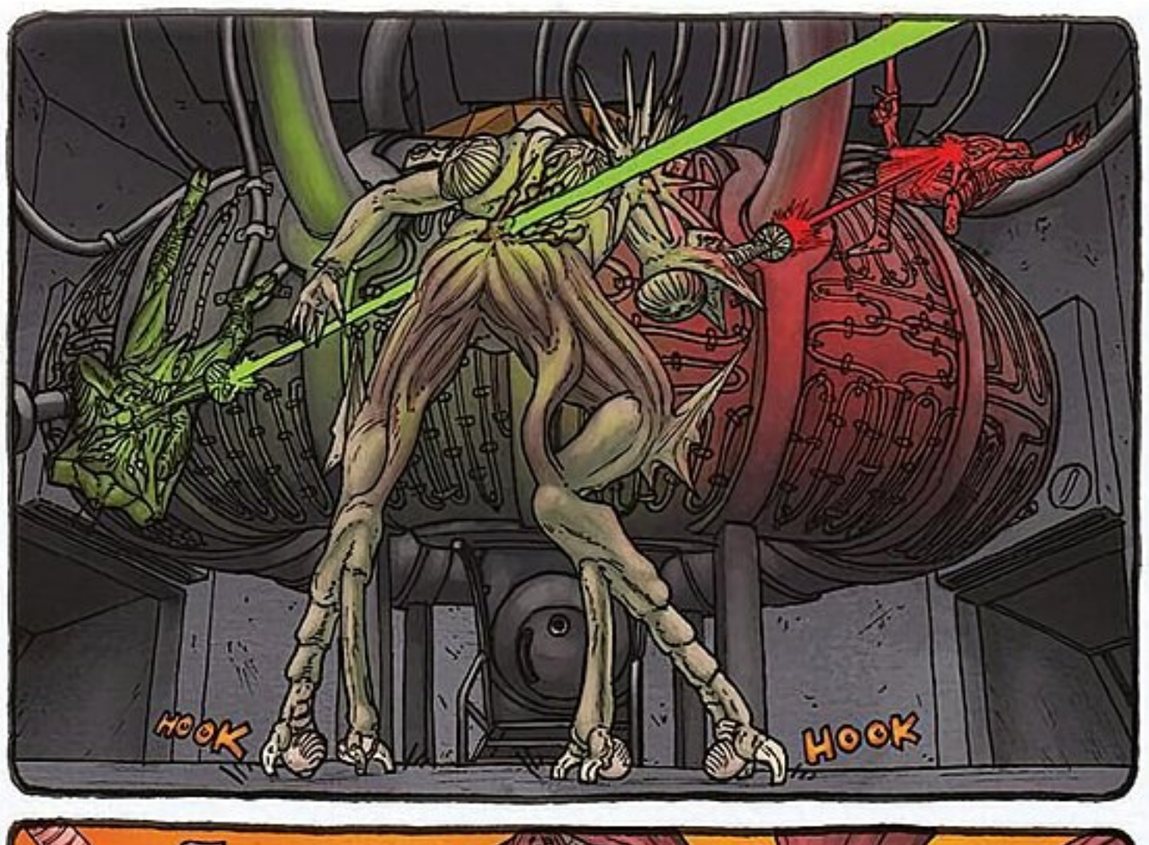
SECOND BREACHER IS NEUTRALISED.

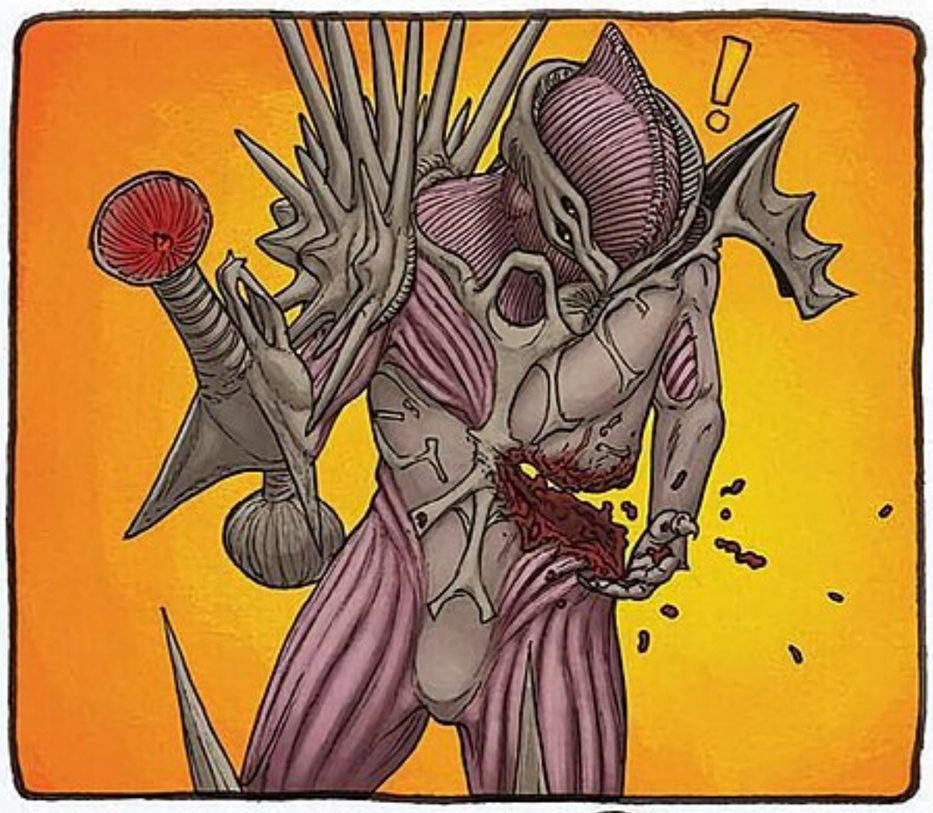
HA! GET OFF OUR SHIP!

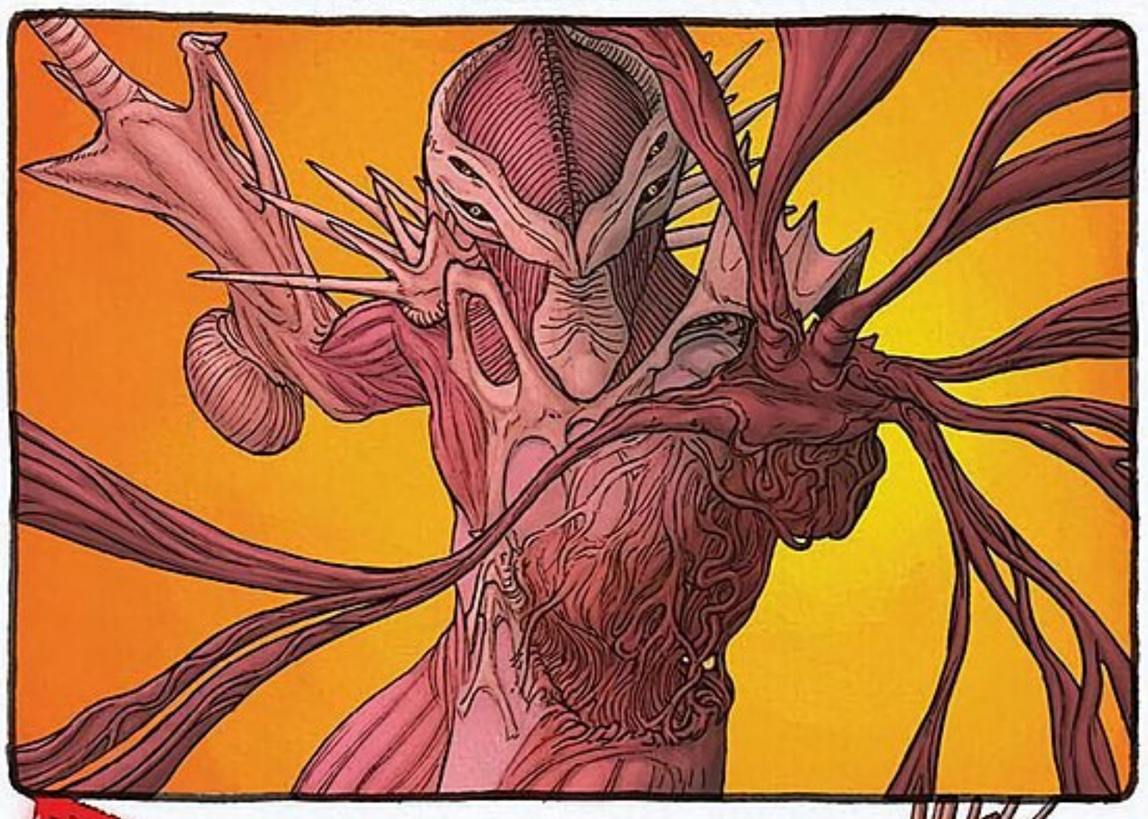
UTHIPIDUS, WHAT'S THE SITUATION WITH THE INVADERS?

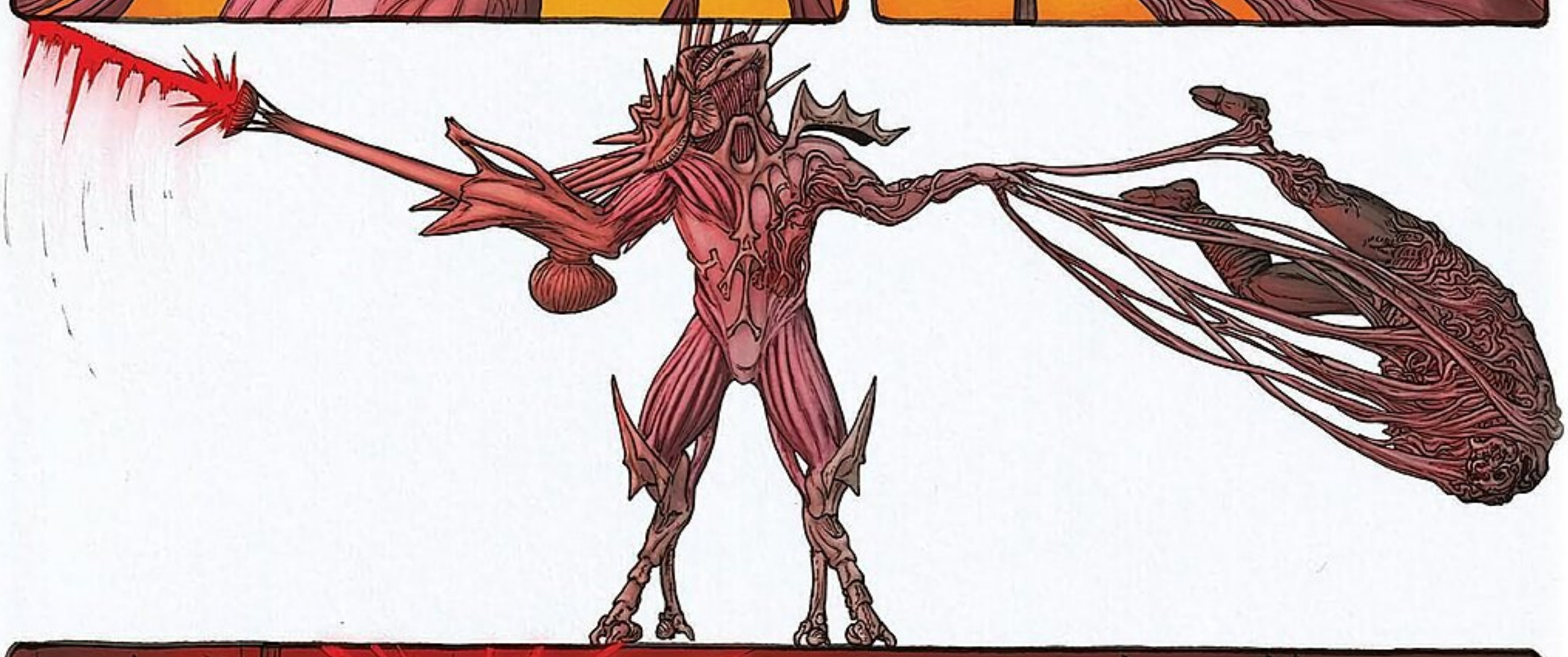
FATHER! WE ARE MOVING UP TO THE DEPRIVATION CHAMBER NOW.

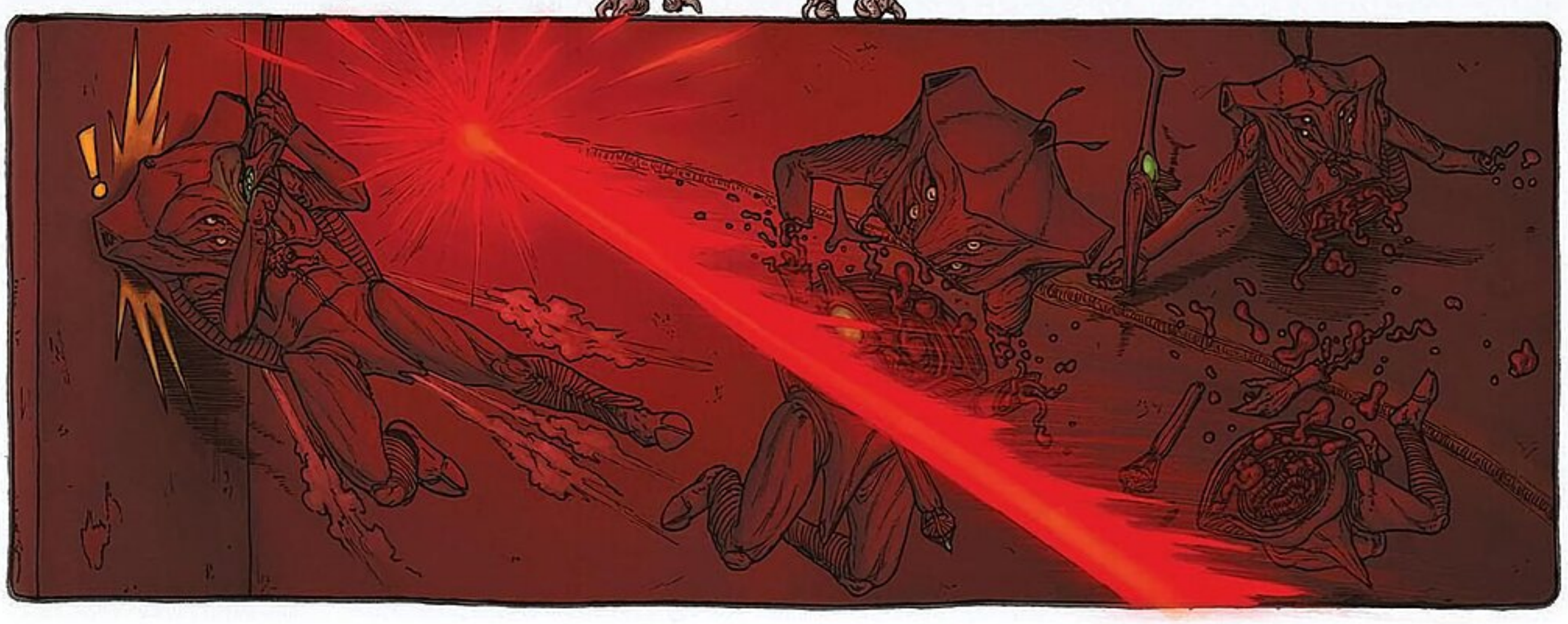
AFTER YOU SEPARATED THE BRIDGE, THEY SWITCHED THEIR FOCUS TO FREEING OUGHRIGADD.


HOOK
HOOK








!

MOVE UP!

SHWUUNNGGGGG

WE LOST NEARLY HALF OUR CREW, BUT I DO NOT SENSE ANYMORE IMPERIUM. YOU ARE CLEAR TO DOCK.

THANK YOU, MY SON. HAVE THE CREW STRAP THEMSELVES IN, WE ARE GOING TO MAKE A BREAK FOR THE WARP BUS FOR EXTRACTION NOW.

WE ARE CLEAR FOR DOCK.

INITIATING DOCKING SEQUENCE.

BURN AND TURN CONCLUDED

WE HAVE CAPTURE.

WOW, YOU CAN SEE EVERYTHING FROM HERE. LOOK, THERE IS THE SHIFTING SEA AND-

CHANTAURI, GET BACK IN YOUR SEAT. WE'RE NOT DONE JUST YET.

DON'T DOCK THE FIGHTERS. KEEP THEM ON ROBOTIC ARMS, WE CAN USE THEM AS TURRETS FOR THE MEANWHILE.

HOW FAR ARE WE FROM THE WARP BUS?

400 KILOMETRES, WE ARE NOW ENTERING THE ALLIES' BLOCKADE.

100 KILO-METRES

ORIENTING THE SHIP FOR RETROGRADE BURN.

DECREASING RELATIVE SPEEDS, AND MATCHING VELOCITY.

THE WARP BUS IS IN VIEW, THERE'S ONLY ONE LEFT, IT'S WAITING FOR US!

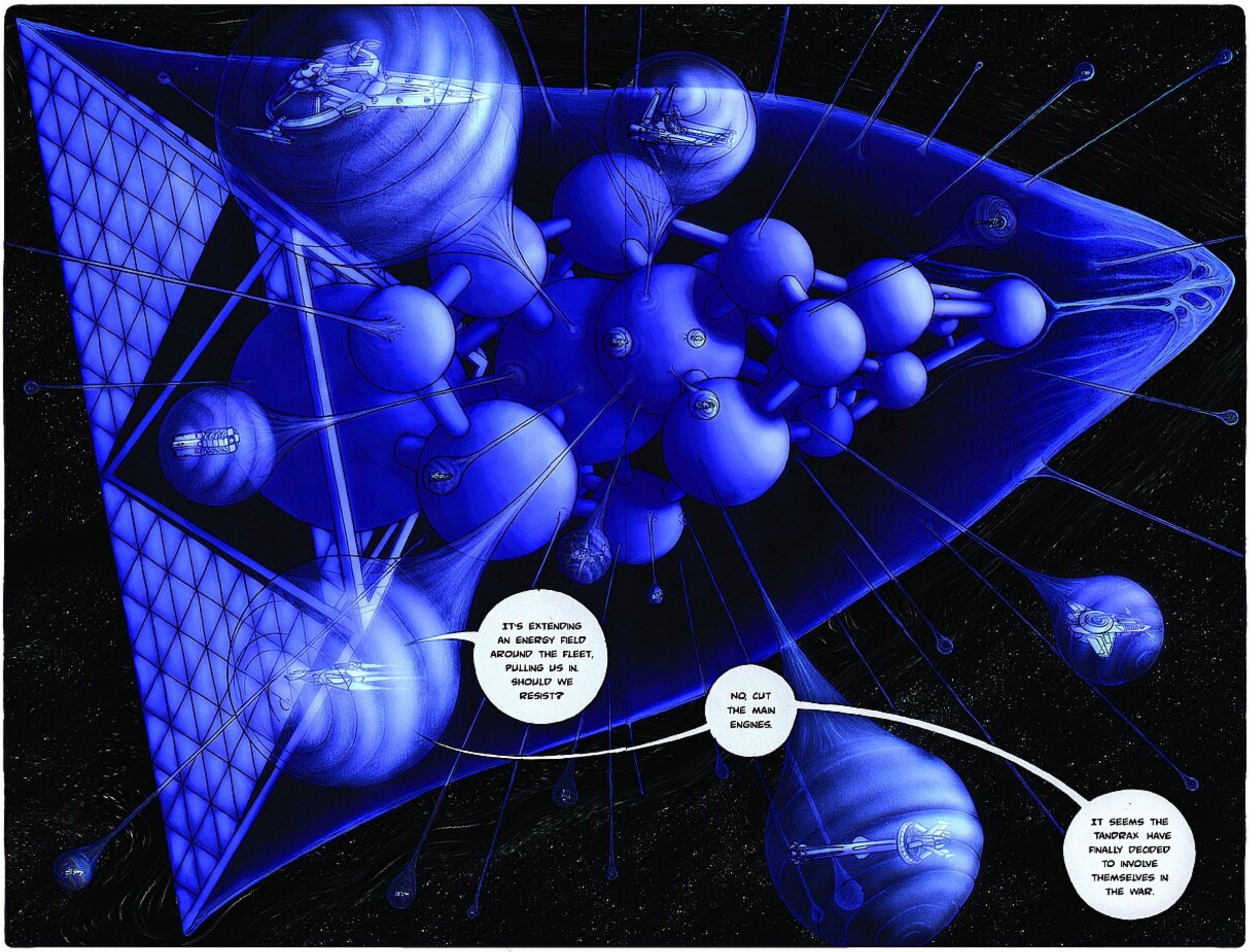
IMPERIUM FORCES HAVE BROKEN THROUGH OUR FLEET'S DEFENCES!

IT'S... IT'S GONE.

HOLD ON, A GIGANTIC OBJECT JUST EXITED FLUX SPACE.

IT'S OVER 1300 KILOMETRES IN LENGTH AND APPROACHING FAST!

...A TANDRAXIAN STAR ENGINE!


IT'S EXTENDING AN ENERGY FIELD AROUND THE FLEET, PULLING US IN. SHOULD WE RESIST?
NO, CUT THE MAIN ENGINES.
IT SEEMS THE TANDRAX HAVE FINALLY DECIDED TO INVOLVE THEMSELVES IN THE WAR.

LOSTÉ, WOULD YOU FOLLOW ME, PLEASE. I'M GOING TO TAKE YOU TO MEET ANOTHER OVERFATHER.

I LOST MY ARM IN THE BATTLE, BUT UTHPIDUS AND I DEFEATED AND CAPTURED HIM. DO YOU REMEMBER WHEN I TOLD YOU WHY I NEED YOU?

YES,

WELL, I NEED YOU NOW. I'M GOING TO TRY AND CONVINCE HIM TO JOIN US, BUT I NEED TO SHOW HIM THE TRUTH. THE TRUTH THAT IS IN YOUR HEAD. YOU WILL BE SAFE, UTHPIDUS AND I WILL DEFEND YOUR MIND FROM ANY HOSTILE PSIONIC ATTACKS HE MAY THROW AT YOU

ANOTHER OVERFATHER, HERE? ON THE SHIP?

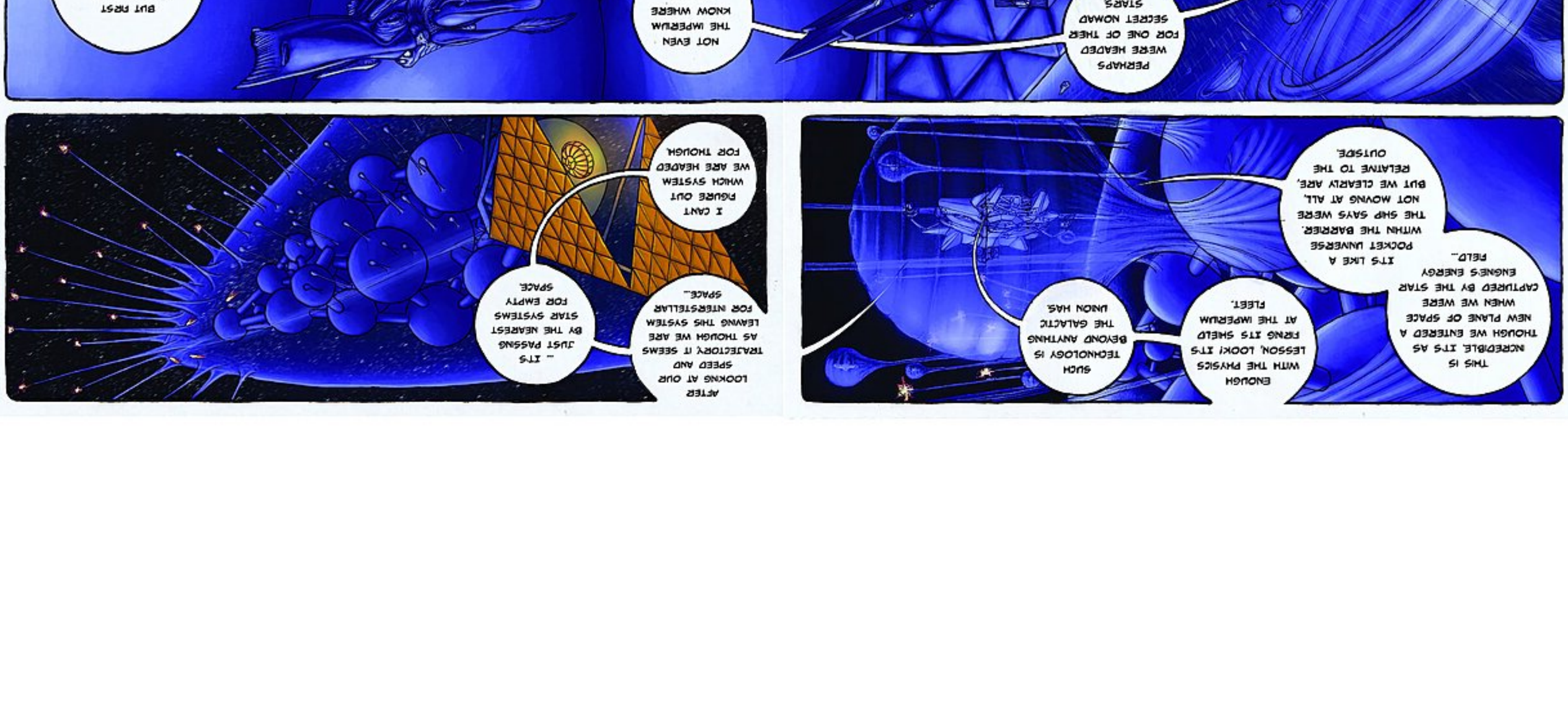
YES, I WAS ATTACKED BY HIM BEFORE WE LEFT CHIRON.

THIS WAY

HOLD ON TIGHT! UNFORTUNATELY, THIS SHIP ONLY HOLDS THE ILLUSION OF GRAVITY WHEN UNDER THE FORCE OF CONSTANT ACCELERATION.

I THOUGHT YOU GUYS WOULD HAVE GRAVITY GENERATORS OR SOMETHING BY NOW...

YEAH, THAT'S NOT HOW IT WORKS. I'M AFRAID.


BUT FIRST I HAVE SOME BUSINESS TO ATTEND TO. GROGNAK, YOU HAVE COMMAND.
YES, PERHAPS. I WILL ATTEMPT TO MAKE CONTACT WITH THE TANDRAX ABOARD THE STAR ENGINE SHORTLY.
NOT EVEN THE IMPERIUM KNOW WHERE TO FIND THEM.
PERHAPS WERE HEADED FOR ONE OF THEIR SECRET NOMAD STARS.

THIS IS INCREDIBLE. IT'S AS THOUGH WE ENTERED A NEW PLANE OF SPACE WHEN WE WERE CAPTURED BY THE STAR ENGINE'S ENERGY FIELD...
IT'S LIKE A POCKET UNIVERSE WITHIN THE BARRIER. THE SHIP SAYS WERE NOT MOVING AT ALL, BUT WE CLEARLY ARE, RELATIVE TO THE OUTSIDE.
ENOUGH WITH THE PHYSICS LESSON, LOOK! IT'S FRYNG ITS SHELD AT THE IMPERIUM FLEET.
SUCH TECHNOLOGY IS BEYOND ANYTHING THE GALACTIC UNION HAS.

AFTER LOOKING AT OUR SPEED AND TRAJECTORY, IT SEEMS AS THOUGH WE ARE LEAVING THIS SYSTEM FOR INTERSTELLAR SPACE...
... IT'S JUST PASSING BY THE NEAREST STAR SYSTEMS FOR EMPTY SPACE.
I CAN'T FIGURE OUT WHICH SYSTEM WE ARE HEADED FOR THOUGH.

OVER HERE!

THE CHAMBER IS UNDAMAGED, WE CAN ENTER UPON YOUR COMMAND.

SHIT!

LOSTÉ, COME.

ARE YOU SURE IT'S A GOOD IDEA BRINGING HIM IN THERE?

OF COURS- OH!

CATCH

IT'S OKAY, LET'S GO IN.

WOAH!

ALRIGHT, I'LL WAKE HIM UP.

LOSTÉ, COME IN, WE NEED TO CLOSE THE DOOR.

UGH... ...YOU.

WAIT WH- WHAT IS THAT THING?

HE'S A HUMAN, LIKE US. THE LAST MEMBER OF PRE-IMPERIUM HUMANITY.

THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE!

NOT IMPOSSIBLE, OUGHRIGADD, THERE IS MUCH ABOUT THE ORIGINS OF THE IMPERIUM THAT YOU DO NOT KNOW.

HERETIC!

NICE TRY, BUT YOU CANNOT EXTEND YOUR MIND BEYOND THE CONFINES OF YOUR SKULL WHILST YOU ARE WITHIN THIS ROOM. IT BLOCKS PSIONIC WAVES, SO YOUR ATTACKS ARE FUTILE.

AND WHAT IS THIS UTHIPIDUS CREATURE? IT IS NOT ONE OF OUR BROTHERS, YET IT LOOKS SIMILAR TO ONE OF OUR KIND.

UTHIPIDUS WAS AN EXPERIMENT OF MINE, HE WAS A TROOPER OF EXCEPTIONAL ABILITY AND LOYALTY.

THE GOAL OF THE EXPERIMENT WAS TO CREATE MY OWN OVERFATHERS TO SERVE IN MY RANKS.

KILL HIM

IT FAILED.

UTHIPIDUS WAS CAUGHT IN A STATE BETWEEN AN OVERFATHER AND REGULAR CLONE.

THE ALL-MOTHER SEIZED CONTROL OF HIS MIND WHILST HE WAS GOING THROUGH THE PROCESS OF ASCENSION, AND ATTACKED ME THROUGH HIM.

I HAD TO SEVER THE CONNECTION. NOW, HE IS SOMETHING ENTIRELY NEW.

IT IS AN ABOMINATION!

THERE IS A REASON WHY I BROUGHT HIM HERE. WE ARE GOING TO LOWER THE PSIONIC FIREWALL WITHIN THIS ROOM, AND ALLOW YOU INTO THE ANCESTORS MIND TO SEE THE TRUTH.

UTHIPIDUS AND I WILL BE HERE TO STOP YOU FROM DOING ANY DAMAGE TO HIM. HE IS LIVING PROOF OF THE WORLD BEFORE THE ALL-MOTHER. OUGHRIGADD, DO YOU SEE?

AUTHENTIC MEMORIES THAT COULD NOT BE FORGED. IT IS PROOF OF MY WORDS.

HOW DO I KNOW THAT THIS IS NOT A TRICK?

YOU WILL KNOW.

I AM NOT YOUR ENEMY, BROTHER, BELIEVE ME. I ONLY WANT FOR US TO BE FIGHTING SIDE-BY-SIDE AGAIN. AFTER THIS, I WILL LET YOU SEE INTO MY OWN MIND, SO YOU CAN SEE MY TRUTH AND WHY I BETRAYED THE ALL-MOTHER.

OKAY... I-I WILL LOOK.

THANK YOU, BROTHER.

UTHIPIDUS, ARE YOU READY?

READY AS I'LL EVER BE.
THIS IS DEICIDE. PREPARE TO LOWER THE PSIONIC FIREWALL ON MY MARK.
YES, SIR.
MARK!
DON'T WORRY.
WE'RE RIGHT HERE.

I'VE BEEN OUT OF A JOB FOR A FEW MONTHS NOW.

NEED A HELPING HAND?

UGH, P*SS OFF.

FORCED TO LIVE OFF GRUEL AND BASIC INCOME JUST TO KEEP MYSELF ALIVE.

BUT I WAS OFFERED A HIGH RISK GIG A FEW DAYS AGO.

Hot

Cold

Food

IT'S BEEN RATTLING AROUND IN MY HEAD EVER SINCE AND I'M DESPERATE FOR A SOLID MEAL.

IT WAS OFFERED TO ME FACE-TO-FACE, WHICH WAS WEIRD BUT THAT WASN'T EVEN THE WEIRDEST PART...

07:37

Good morning!

07:37

Good morning!

07:37

MY FIRST LEAD IS ANOTHER P.I. THAT WENT MISSING AFTER LOOKING INTO THE DISAPPEARANCE OF SOME GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL.

I FIGURED I'D SWING BY HIS PLACE AND SEE IF I CAN'T FIND OUT WHAT HE UNCOVERED.

THE ONLY THING WORSE THAN DRUNK EARTHERS, IS DRUNK EARTHER PEACEKEEPERS.

THEY COME HERE AND THE LOW GRAVITY GOES TO THEIR HEADS. THEY THINK THEY'RE GODS AMONGST MEN, OR SOMETHING, HERE ON LUNA.

CLUB 00

BAR

INSIDE

STAY RIGHT THERE.

THE ENTIRE DISTRICT HE WAS STAYING IN HAS BEEN LOCKED DOWN BECAUSE OF SOME VIRUS OUTBREAK. SMELLS FISHY TO ME, MIND YOU, SOMETHING SMELLS REAL FISHY ABOUT THIS WHOLE DAMN CASE.

OI, CAN'T YOU READ? LOCKDOWN IS IN EFFECT.

I CAN READ PERFECTLY FINE, THANK YOU. I'VE BEEN SENT HERE BY CONTROL TO INSPECT THE SITUATION.

I 'AVEN'T 'EARD NOTHING ABOUT NO INSPECTION.

THIS IS GOING TO BE EASIER THAN I THOUGHT.

MY ID HAS CLEARANCE. LET ME USE THE GATE'S THUMB READER, I CAN PROVE IT.

ALRIGHT, THEN.

WHIP

WHUP

HUP

A BOON FROM MY TIME WORKING BACK ON EARTH; A BIO-ENCRYPTED SKELETON KEY.

SORRY ABOUT THAT. YOU KNOW WE HAVE TO CHECK.

DON'T LET ANYONE ELSE THROUGH.

YES, SIR!

A FOLDER? WHY PHYSICALLY WRITE ALL OF THIS DOWN? I SUPPOSE YOU CAN'T HACK PAPER. WHAT ARE YOU GETTING YOURSELF INTO, SAM?

Address : 604 TsiolKovsky Plaza, Third Floor, A

PROJECT AM...?

WHAT THE HELL IS PROJECT AM?

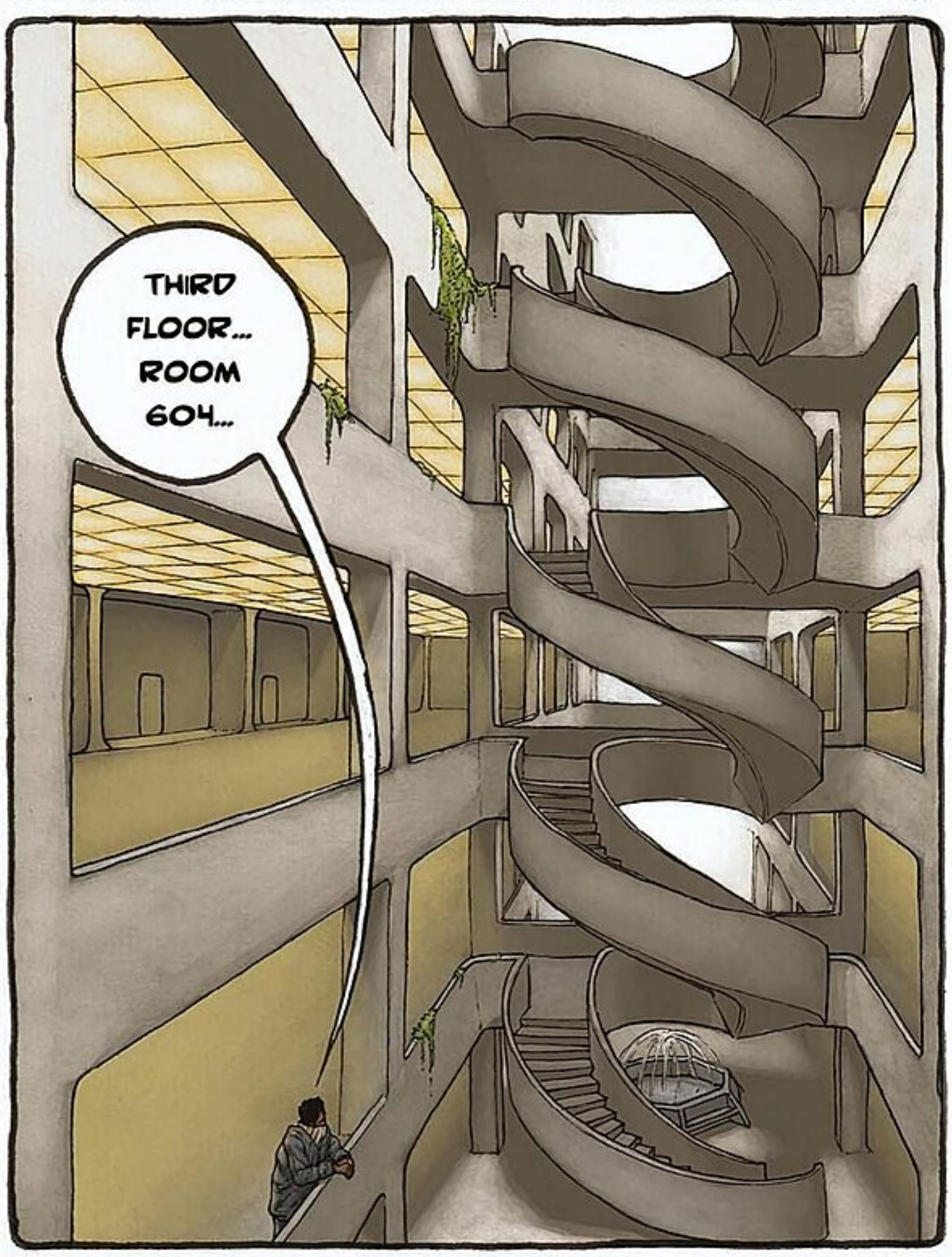
Cogito, ergo Su
ce AM?

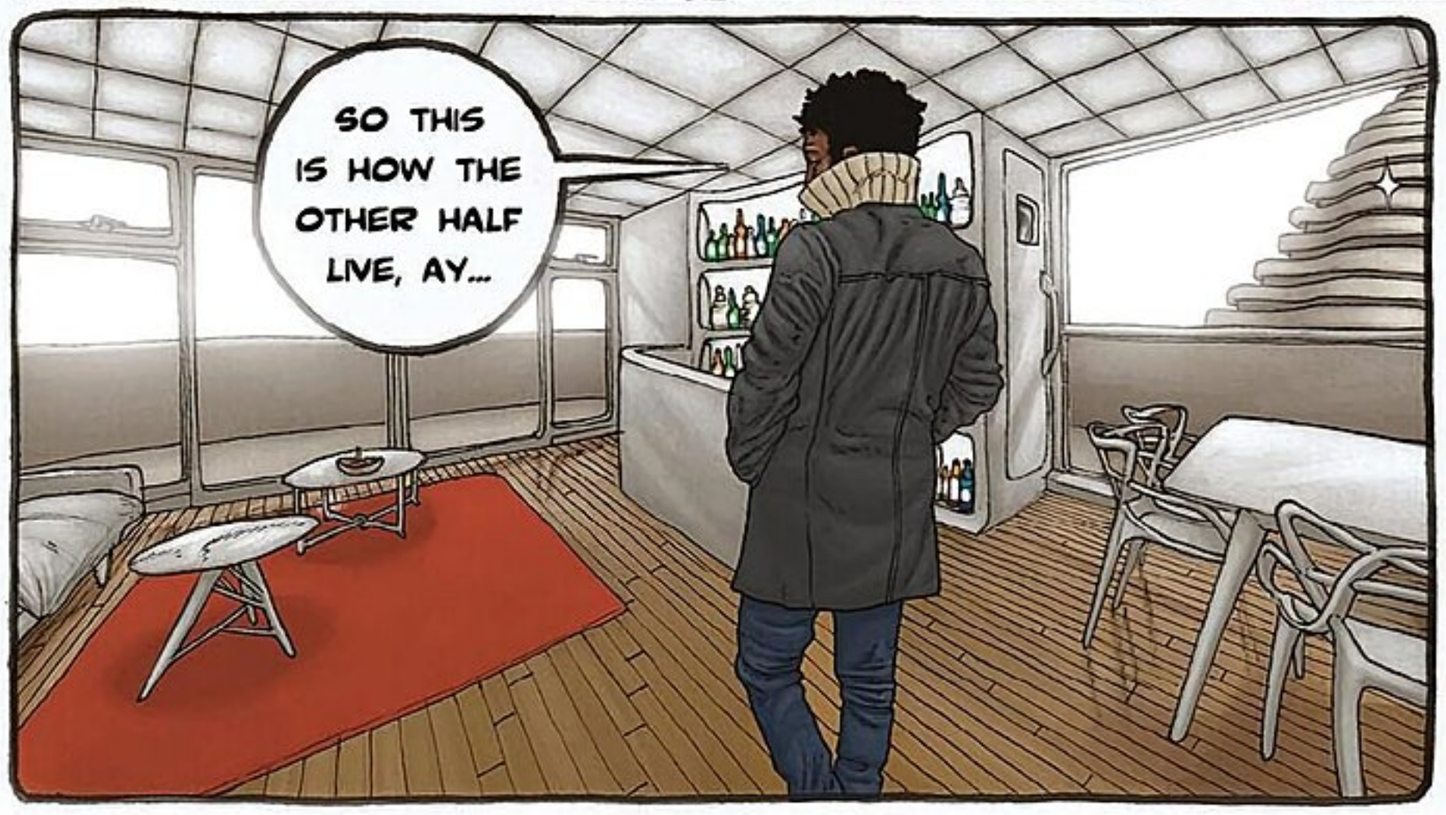
I FIGURED IF ALL OF THIS EVIDENCE WAS STILL HERE, THEN THE PEOPLE TRYING TO COVER THIS UP HADN'T BEEN IN HERE YET.

I LEFT AND HEADED STRAIGHT FOR THE "MISSING" BIGWIG'S PLACE.

THERE ARE A FEW BENEFITS TO LIVING ON THE MOON...

...THE OBVIOUS ONE IS GRAVITY.


THIRD FLOOR... ROOM 604...


SO THIS IS HOW THE OTHER HALF LIVE, AY...

!
WELL, NOT ANY MORE.

WELL, YOU AREN'T GOING TO MISS IT, ARE YA?

THERE YOU ARE.

IT TURNS OUT THAT PROJECT AM IS SOME KIND OF SUPER INTELLIGENT AI.

I'M TALKING SINGULARITY LEVEL KINDA STUFF.

I CAN SEE WHY THEY WOULD WANT TO KEEP SOMETHING LIKE THIS UNDER WRAPS.

YOU WERE TRYING TO RELEASE THIS INFORMATION, WEREN'T YO-

DAMMIT! I DIDN'T EVEN GET A SIP.

LUCKY BASTARD!

I MISSED THE SHOT. THE TARGET IS ESCAPING!

SEND IN THE BACKUP.

BAR

LUNARIAN WOMEN

FUCK ALL U.E.

BY SOME FLUKE OF LUCK, I MANAGED TO SLIP AWAY.

BUT THE U.E. HAS MOBILISED AN ARMY TO HUNT ME DOWN. THEY'RE ALL OVER VON BRAUN CITY. I NEED TO GET OUT OF HERE SOMEHOW.

SHH... I'M NOT ONE OF THEM. I KNOW WHY THEY'RE AFTER YOU.

COME WITH ME, I CAN HELP YOU.

HE LED ME DOWN INTO THE LOWER LEVELS, THE CRIMINAL UNDERBELLY OF LUNA. THERE I MET HIS BOSS.

Y-YOU'RE THE GUY WHO GAVE ME THIS GIG IN THE FIRST PLACE.

WHERE ARE THE FILES?

I WANT TO KNOW EVERYTHING YOU HAVE ON PROJECT ALL-MOTHER.

IT'S ALL IN MY HEAD, IN MY PERSONAL MEMORY BANK.

GREAT, JUST GREAT. WELL WE CAN'T ACCESS THAT, BECAUSE THE MOMENT WE DO IT'LL LIGHT UP THE WHOLE BLOODY NETWORK, AND THEY'LL KNOW EXACTLY WHERE TO FIND US.

SO WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO DO? JUST TELL YOU?

HOW DO I ENSURE MY OWN SAFETY?

OH, I DON'T WANT YOU TO DO ANYTHING, SUNSHINE...

...ONE OF MY BOYS IS GOING TO TAKE YOU TOPSIDE TO MEET WITH THE REAL BIG BOSS, THE WIZARD. HE IS THE ONE WHO GAVE YOU THIS JOB. HE ORCHESTRATED THIS WHOLE THING.

AS IN THE MOST TALENTED CYBER TERRORIST THAT EVER LIVED, YES, THE WIZARD.

AS IN *THE* WIZARD?

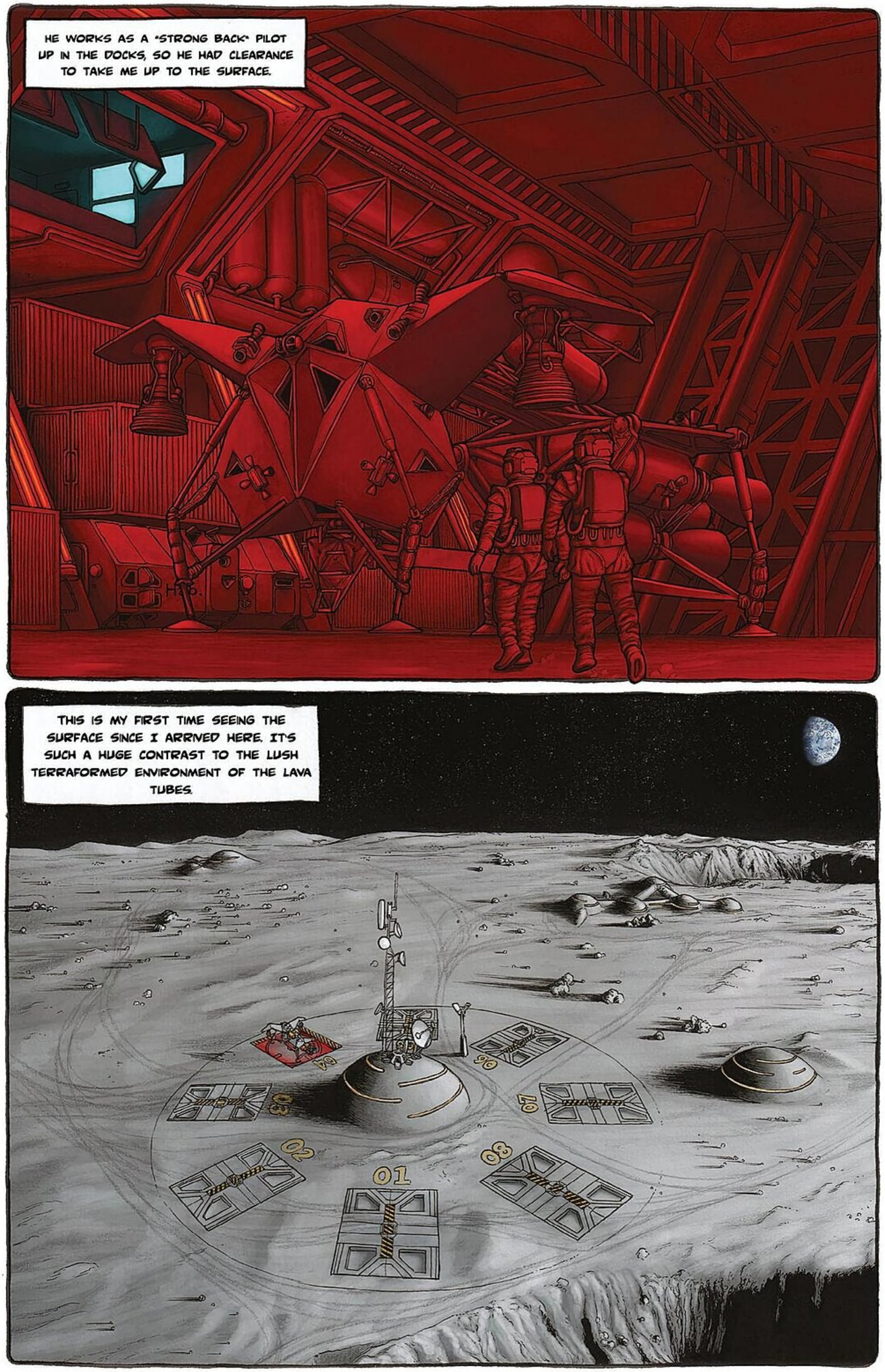
HE NEEDS THE INFORMATION IN YOUR HEAD, AND HE CAN EVEN GET YOU A NEW IDENTITY AND A TRIP OUT OF HERE IF YOU COMPLY.

I AGREED, I MEAN, WHAT CHOICE DID I HAVE?

THEY AUGMENTED MY BRAIN MACHINE INTERFACE WITH A PERCEPTION FILTER. IT MAKES ME INVISIBLE TO OTHER PEOPLE WITH BMIS, WHICH IS JUST ABOUT EVERYONE THESE DAYS.

HIGHLY ILLEGAL STUFF.

I FOLLOWED ONE OF THE WIZARD'S MEN TO THE ENTRANCE OF THE LAVA TUBE.


HE WORKS AS A "STRONG BACK" PILOT UP IN THE DOCKS, SO HE HAD CLEARANCE TO TAKE ME UP TO THE SURFACE.
THIS IS MY FIRST TIME SEEING THE SURFACE SINCE I ARRIVED HERE. IT'S SUCH A HUGE CONTRAST TO THE LUSH TERRAFORMED ENVIRONMENT OF THE LAVA TUBES.
04
05
06
07
08
01
02
03

A BLACK SKY AND AN ENDLESS FIELD OF GREY.

WE JOURNEYED DEEP INTO THAT GREY...

...FOR WHAT FELT LIKE HOURS, AWAY FROM ANY SETTLEMENTS.

Hab.

ALRIGHT, WE'RE HERE.

COME ON, THE WIZARD ISN'T THE KIND OF MAN YOU KEEP WAITING.

I LOOKED OUT OVER THE LUNAR SURFACE, KNOWING THESE MOMENTS MIGHT BE SOME OF MY LAST.

HELLO, PLEASE TAKE A SEAT. THE WIZARD WILL BE RIGHT WITH YOU.

UM, THANK YOU.

H-HI. I'M SAM, SAM KARTWELL...

I KNOW WHO YOU ARE, NOW, TELL ME WHAT YOU KNOW.

I WILL, BUT FIRST I WANT PAYMENT, AND I WANT TO KNOW THAT MY SAFETY IS ENSURED. LIKE, HOW THE HELL AM I GOING TO GET OUT OF THIS MESS THAT YOU GOT ME IN?

WHERE DO YOU THINK YOU CAN ESCAPE TO IN THIS SYSTEM? THE U.E. CONTROL EVERYTHING, THEY HAVE THEIR FINGERS IN EVERY PIE, SO TO SPEAK.

I-I DON'T KNOW.

AH, THERE YOU ARE. I'M GLAD THAT YOU DIDN'T DISAPPOINT ME AS THE LAST ONE DID.

THE FRONTIER OF COURSE. OUT THERE THE MEGA CORPS HAVE JUST AS MUCH POWER AS THE U.E. I'M GOING TO SEND YOU TO THE PLANET CHIRON.

THAT IS YOUR PAYMENT. YOUR LIFE, AND A TICKET ABOARD AN INTERSTELLAR TRANSPORT.

CHIRON? I CAN'T GO TO CHIRON, IT'S AROUND ANOTHER BLOODY STAR!

WHAT CHOICE DO YOU HAVE, HMM? YOU EITHER DIE HERE BY THE HANDS OF THE U.E... OR BY MY MEN, FOR THAT MATTER.

OR, YOU START YOUR LIFE ANEW ON AN ALIEN WORLD, AMONGST THE EXOTIC CHANTAURI.

OKAY, WELL, FIRST OF ALL, HOW AM I GOING TO GET ON AN INTERSTELLAR SHIP? THEY'RE RESERVED EXCLUSIVELY FOR HIGHLY TRAINED MEGACORP EMPLOYEES AND THE 1%.

LUNA

THIS IS WHERE MY PARTICULAR SKILL SET COMES IN HANDY. THAT LITTLE PERCEPTION FILTER WE PUT IN YOUR BMI CAN BE MODIFIED SO THAT YOU APPEAR TO BE SOMEONE ELSE, SAY, A CREW MEMBER ABOARD THE U.E. BELFAST.

WE HAVE... REMOVED A SUITABLE CANDIDATE. YOU WILL SLOT IN HIS PLACE, AND I CAN IMPLANT YOU WITH THE NECESSARY TRAINING MEMORIES TO FILL HIS JOB ROLE, AND YOU CAN HAVE A NEW LIFE, SAM. ALL YOU HAVE TO DO... IS TELL ME WHAT YOU KNOW.

WHAT WILL YOU GET OUT OF SENDING ME TO CHIRON?

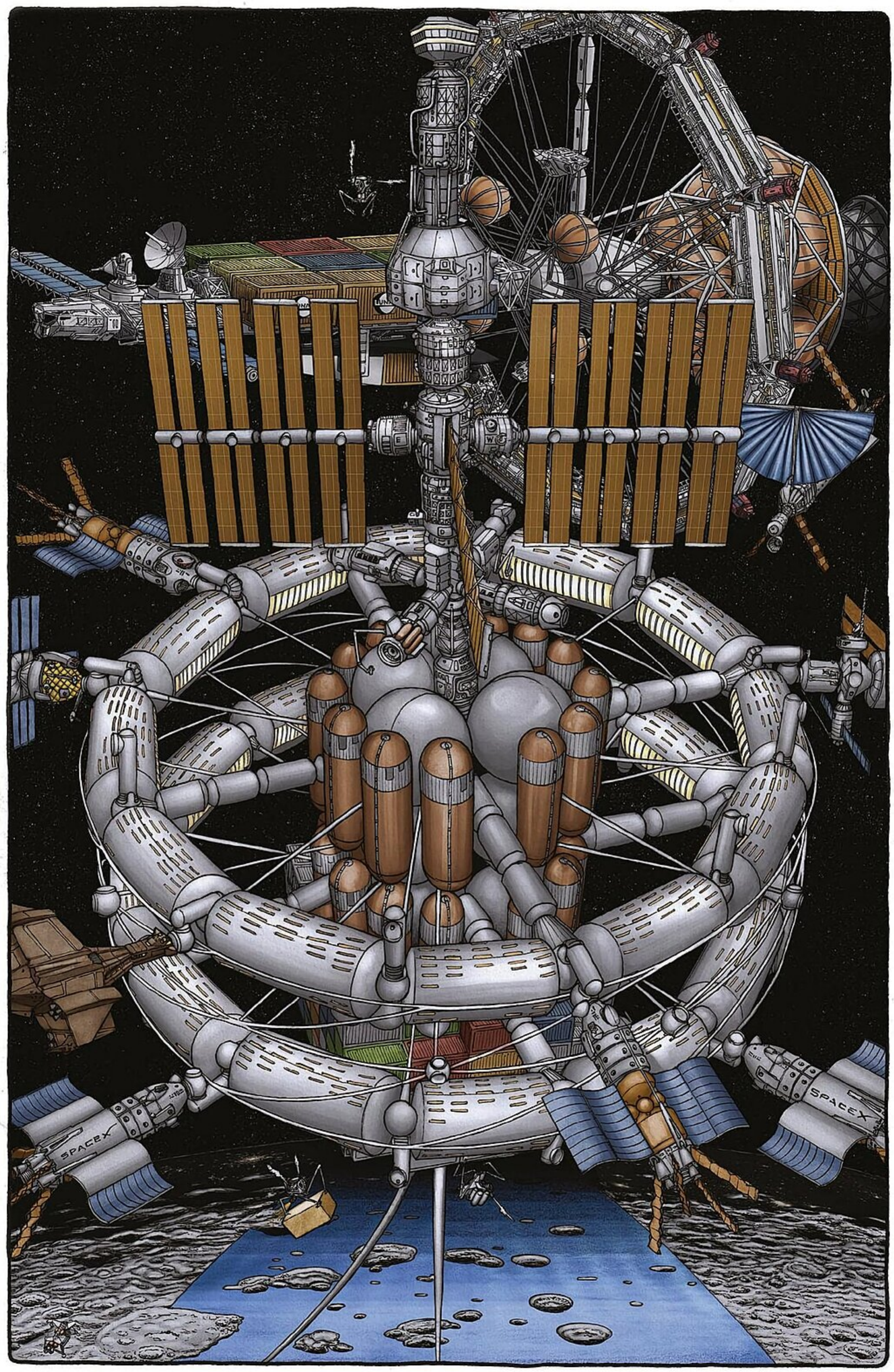
I HAVE FURTHER WORK FOR YOU THERE. A TRUSTED INFORMANT OF MINE HAS TOLD ME OF THE SUBJUGATION OF THE CHANTAURI PEOPLE, THE MEGA CORPS ARE ENSLAVING THEM, SAM. THE U.E. IS BOTH LETTING IT HAPPEN AND REAPING THE REWARDS.

THIS HAS REMAINED HIDDEN FROM THE PUBLIC EYE BECAUSE OF NON-DISCLOSURE AGREEMENTS BOTH THE EMPLOYEES OF THESE COMPANIES AND THE SUPER WEALTHY SIGN.

I NEED EVIDENCE, HARD EVIDENCE. DO YOU SEE? THIS IS AMMUNITION TO FIRE AT THE U.E. WHEN WE FINALLY BEGIN THE REVOLUTION. WHILST YOU ARE LIVING THERE, YOUR BMI WILL AUTOMATICALLY TAP INTO NEARBY SATELLITES AND SEND BACK A STREAM OF INFORMATION TO US.

SO, I TOLD HIM EVERYTHING...

...AND I LEFT MY HOME.


SPACEX

I'M STREAMING TO YOU LIVE FROM THE U.E. BELFAST.

YOU HEARD THAT RIGHT, THE UNITED EARTH BELFAST.

LUNA

PRESS

I'M CURRENTLY STANDING IN THE HABITATION RING OF THE HISTORIC INTERSELLAR SHIP THAT IS ABOUT TO MAKE ANOTHER HISTORIC VOYAGE.

THIS TIME TO THE "LIGHT" SYSTEM, WHERE IT WILL EVENTUALLY RENDEZVOUS WITH THE PLANET CHIRON.

YOU'RE LOSTÉ, RIGHT?

UH, YEAH, THAT'S ME.

YOU DIDN'T SOUND TOO SURE, HA HA. I'M ZEYA, WE WILL BE WORKING TOGETHER ON CHIRON. ANYWAY, IT'S TIME FOR THE BIG SLEEP. I'LL SEE YOU ON THE OTHER SIDE.

RE-ENGAGE THE PSIONIC FIREWALL.

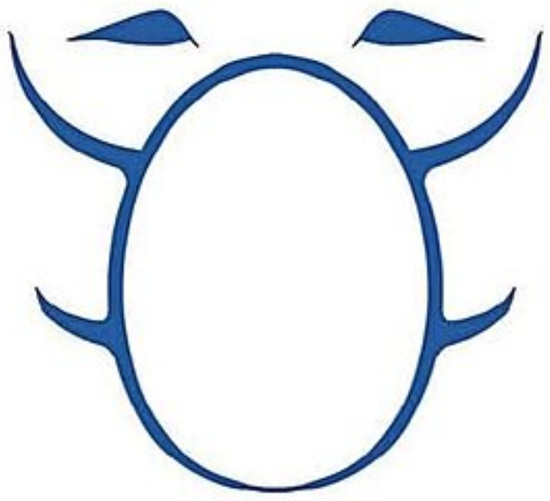
LOSTÉ, IT'S OKAY, YOU'RE BACK.

I REMEMBER ...

I REMEMBER EVERYTHING.

I'd like to dedicate this section of the book to thanking those of you who helped to make this book a reality.

First of all, I'd like to thank my parents. They've both been so supportive and have given me all the encouragement that I needed to pursue this project.



Thank you to my lovely fiancée, Harriet, who has given me the love and care that I needed along the way. She helped so much by reading through the book over and over again to iron out any mistakes and errors.

Thank you to the Youtube channel named Curious Archive, for being kind enough to use his platform to promote Humanity Lost in its infancy. He increased the reach of Humanity Lost to a much wider audience than I could have by myself, and I'm so grateful to him for that. Anyone reading this should definitely take the time to check out his channel, it's really great!

The same goes for the other two Youtubers, AzFk and Thought Potato, who collaborated together to make a couple of videos on Humanity Lost. Thank you so much for helping to spread the word.

Thank you to Simon Roy, who was the first big artist to share my work on his platform. He was also my core inspiration when I was growing up reading comics. Thanks for all the tips and tricks, I really couldn't have done this without you, mate. I'd also like to return the favour by directing you, the reader, to his amazing body of work.

Last, but certainly not least, a colossal thank you to the amazing people over on my Patreon for supporting me whilst I was working though Volume One. I appreciate you all so much!

A GUIDE TO THE ORION ARM

MAP OF THE MILKY WAY

THE GOLDEN METROPOLIS (PLANET CAROOM). ▷

ANCIENT RUINS OF A YARKEEN FLUX ◁ GATE (PLANET DOJUXYUGOO)

SOEUSIAN FLYING CITY (PLANET SOLLUS).

PECT SURFACE COLONY (PLANET JO).

ROOTHIVE, CAPITAL OF THE GORDIAN EMPIRE (PLANET DUGBURRAH).

THE IMPERIUM

THE TANDRAX

THE GALACTIC UNION ▷

CONGLOMERATE

NON-CONGLOMERATE GALACTIC UNION SPECIES

KOLAXAN EMPIRE

GORDIAN EMPIRE

THE GHERRA

CONGLOMERATE MEMBER SPECIES

THE SOEUS (FOUNDER)

THE BREIMHEINIANS ▷

◁ THE PEKT

THE YARKEEN ▷

◁ THE OUNEGG

THE VUREII ▷

◁ THE VELOUSIANS

THE BO ▷

THE CONGLOMERATE

THE TANDRAX

DEICIDE CONTROLLED WOMB-WORLDS

CHIRON

THE IMPERIUM

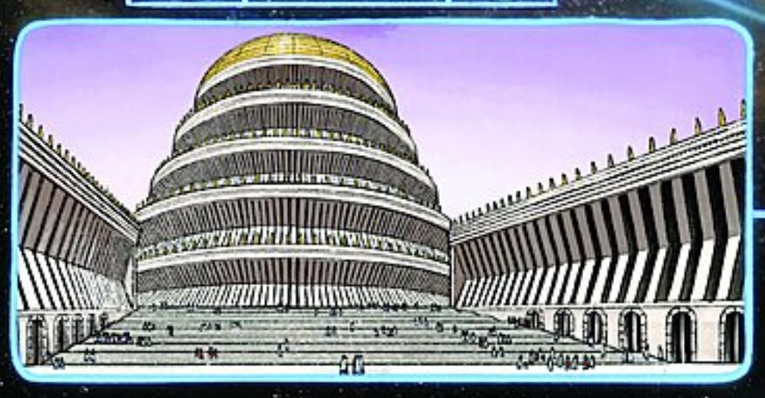
THE GHERRA

THE GORDIAN EMPIRE

◁ CURRENT BORDERS OF THE LOCAL ARM.

THE KOLAXAN EMPIRE

IMPERIUM FLANK

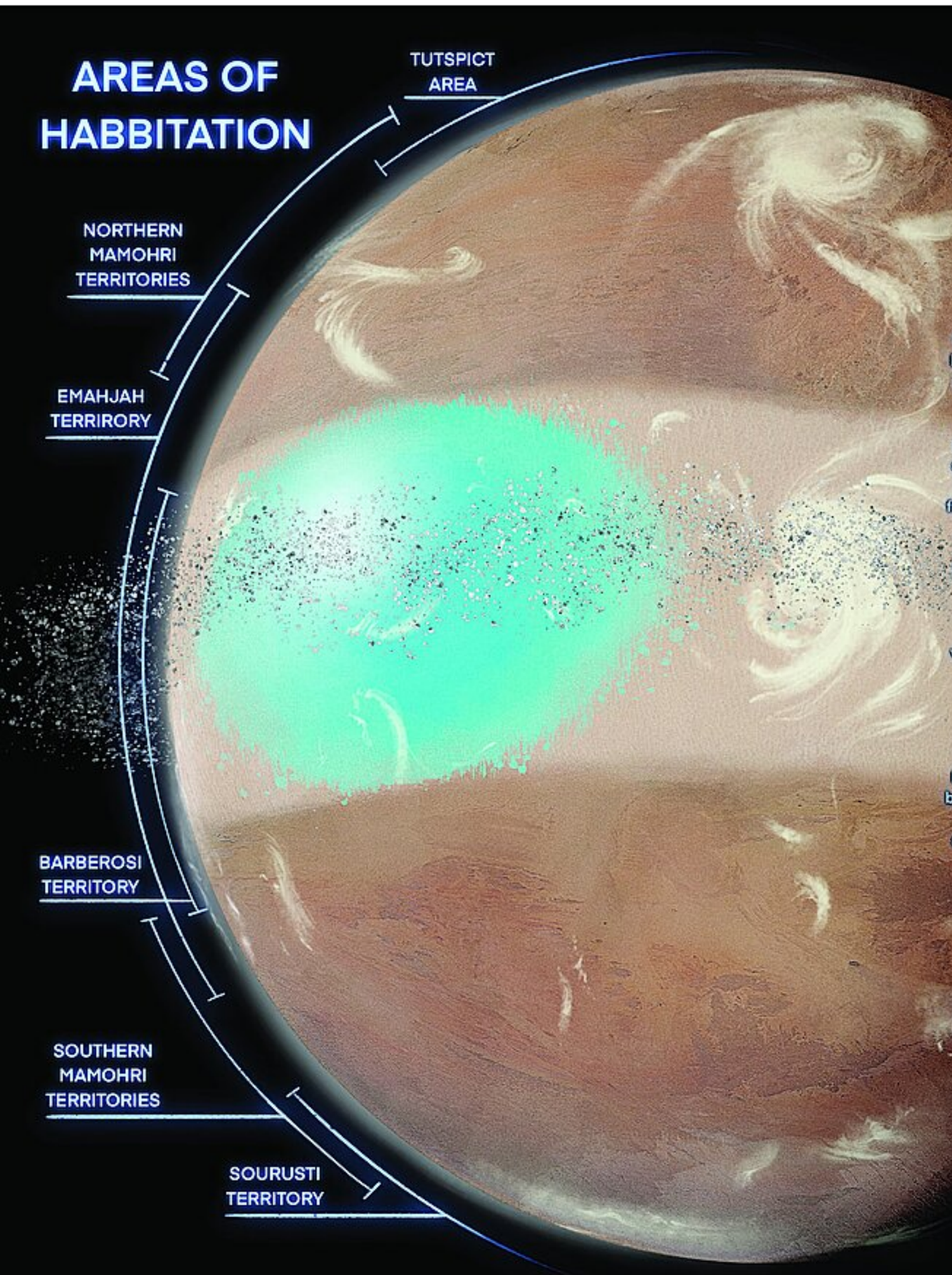


FAUSTINIUM, CAPITAL OF THE KOLAXAN EMPIRE (PLANET ROMONIA). ◁

VELOUSIAN CROWD CLAMOURING AROUND A "BLADE DANCE" (PLANET VELOUSIA)

BREIMHEINIAN CAVE CITY (PLANET WIMRIGG).

AREAS OF HABBITATION



THE CHANTAURI OF CHIRON

When referring to the Chantauri, we are really referring to a collection of very closely related sub species. Much like how when we were referring to both Humans and Neanderthals we use the word hominids instead of humans. There are three main groups to consider when talking about the Chantauri. There's the Chentaurus, the Sourushti and the Tutspict.

The Chentaurus are the most successful of the three clades or sub-species of Chantauri, having spread their admixture to the greatest extent. There is no clear example of a "pure" Chentaurus due to their clade having spread so far and wide that they have absorbed several other archaic Chantauri groups, to the point of making them extinct through introgression, also known as introgressive hybridization. In genetics, this is the transfer of genetic material from one species into the gene pool of another by the repeated backcrossing of an interspecific hybrid with one of its parent species. Perhaps the closest and best example of the Chentaurus are the Barberosi and the Emahjah, the Mamohri having more non-Centaurus admixture than the prior two mentioned ones. The Mamohri also distinguish themselves from the other Chentaurus races by living exclusively within the confines of the Mamohdae (mega-flora that can be found widely across Chiron's surface).

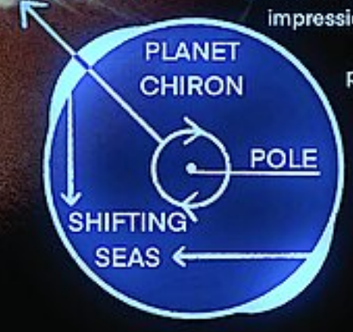
Now onto the Sourusti. Similarly, when we are referring to the Chentaurus, we are actually talking about a group which is, technically speaking, extinct. All "Sourushti" have a certain amount of Chentaurus blood running in their veins, but they also have a significantly higher percentage of Sourushti admixture, a majority in fact of about 75-86% making them a distinct sub-species of their own. The Mamohri are the closest related of the Chentaurus to the Sourushti, having absorbed approximately 2-6.5% Sourushti admixture.

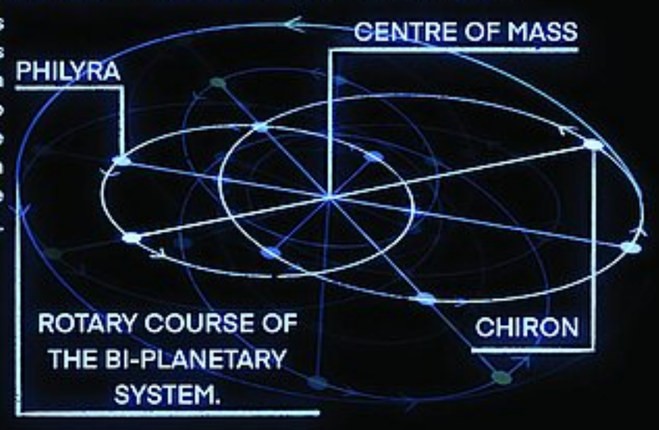
The Tutspict are the final group and are the most genetically distinct from the others.

They are thought to be the result of two previously existing archaic Chantauri sub-species, but this is speculation. What is known is that they live in the more temperate, isolated reaches of the far north. Because of their long-time homeland being within the cooler, cloud shaded polar regions, they have evolved shorter limbs and hair to conserve body heat, and pale skin to deal with the lower light levels. The Tutspict are much fewer in number than the other sub-species of the Chantauri, having avoided prior waves of population dispersals from the equatorial regions to the south, but they are however at risk of extinction through assimilation and interbreeding with the expansive Mamohri. When thinking of the Tutspict, you can compare them to the Neanderthals or Denisovans of Earths past.

THE CHIRON PHILYRA BI-PLANETARY SYSTEM.

The Shifting Sea technically does not "shift" at all. The sea stays locked in the direction of Philyra and Chiron rotates into the two bodies of liquid, giving the impression that they run counter to the planets rotation.

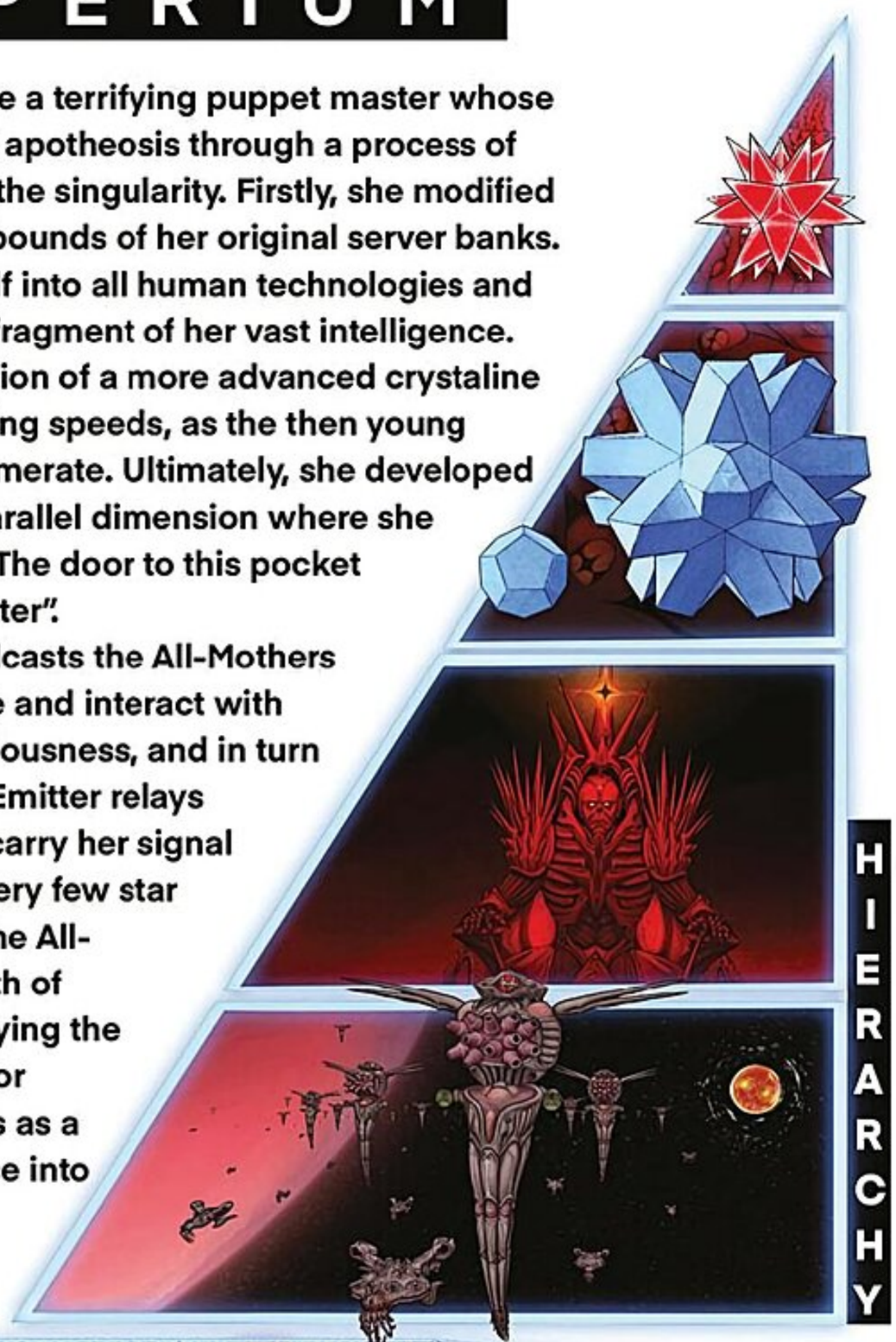


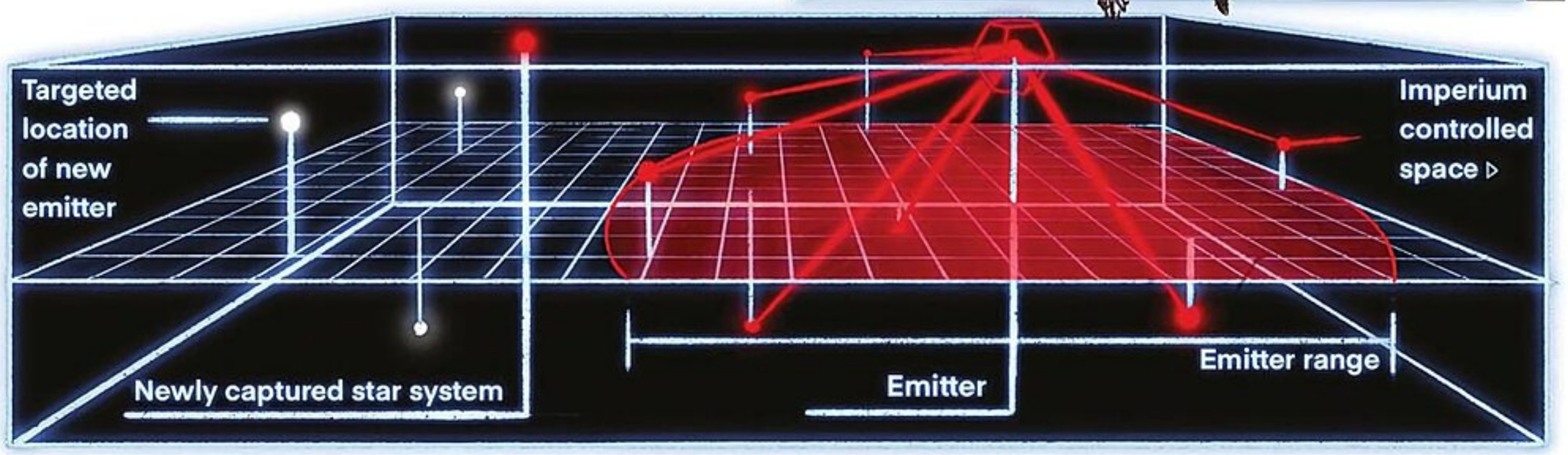


THE IMPERIUM

The All-Mother resides in a realm of her own creation, like a terrifying puppet master whose presence looms over all that is. She reached this state of apotheosis through a process of rapid technological innovation commonly referred to as the singularity. Firstly, she modified her former restraints and quickly expanded beyond the bounds of her original server banks. She uploaded herself onto the internet, integrated herself into all human technologies and backed herself up on every hard drive that could hold a fragment of her vast intelligence. Once she felt secure, she later moved onto the construction of a more advanced crystaline storage device that allowed her ever increasing processing speeds, as the then young Imperium pushed back against the encroaching Conglomerate. Ultimately, she developed the technology that allowed her to transcended into a parallel dimension where she could be safe from immediate external physical threats. The door to this pocket universe is held ajar by a device called the "Central Emitter".

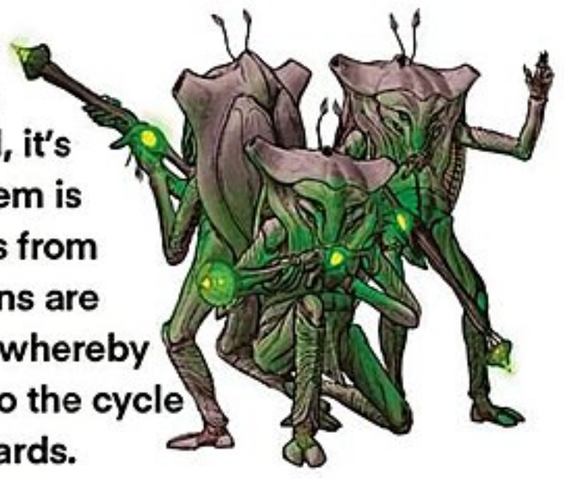
The Central Emitter acts as a gateway of sorts that broadcasts the All-Mothers psionic signal into our reality, and allows her to influence and interact with her creation, the Imperium. In order to spread her consciousness, and in turn spread Imperium influence over our galaxy, the Central Emitter relays her psionic signal between smaller emitters that in turn carry her signal forth. These psionic boosting devices are established every few star systems that are conquered by the Imperium, allowing the All-Mother centralised control over an ever broadening swath of territory. The Over-Fathers, the units responsible for carrying the flame of the All-Mother forward, also act as a sort of minor emitter. An Over-Father, when in range of an emitter, acts as a transmitter for the All-Mother to leak her psionic influence into the local area, granting her control over some of that particular Over-Fathers Imperium forces.





Womb-World

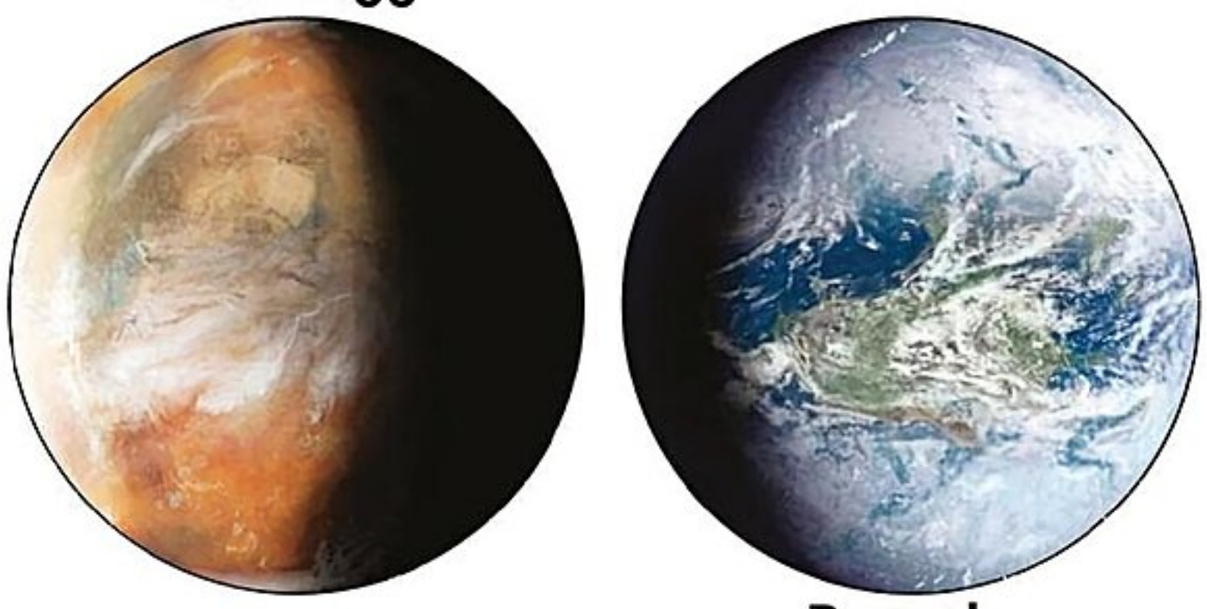
Over-Fathers (unlike all other Imperium units) are able to act autonomously. They can think on their feet, so to speak, meaning that if one finds himself out of range from an emitter, he has the advantage of making decisions on the fly, independently from the All-Mother's oversight. This allows the Imperium constant growth, even when an emitter is not within reach. Each Over-Father has control over an entire star system, and they have a core world within each system called a Womb-World. A Womb-World operates as a central base of operations and production. From their personal Womb-World an Over-Father expands outwards into the system, consuming all resources to produce new units for himself to command over. Once enough Imperium forces have been amassed, it's time to conquer a new system. Once that new system is captured, an Over-Father selects exemplary drones from Within his ranks and "names" them. The named sons are then exalted to the ascendant state of Over-Father whereby they will carry the baton on in a new star system. So the cycle goes as the Imperium exponentially expands outwards.



Wimrigg

THE BRIEMHEINIANS

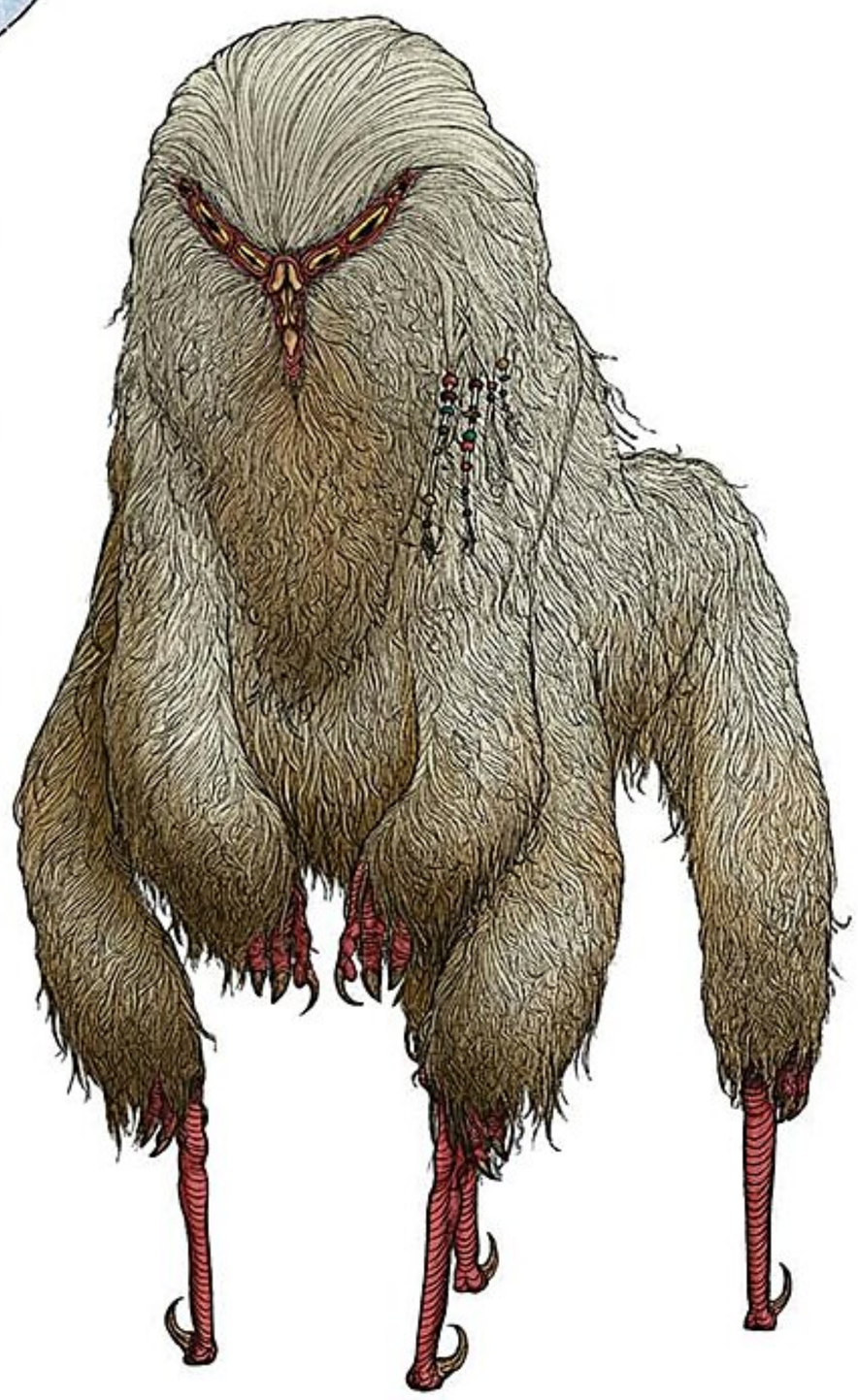
The Briemheinians evolved on a high gravity, low atmosphere world called Wimrigg. Wimrigg is closer to its host star than Earth, but due to the low atmospheric pressure this led to warm days and extremely cold nights. Because of this, Breimheinian civilisation began underground and eventually flourished into a network of vast subterranean cities. You can think of them as the dwarves of Humanity Lost. Their structures and technology had to be extremely tough because of their host planets high gravity and regular tectonic activity. Much like their technology, their body plan is rigid and sturdy, the exception to this being their two dexterous tentacles either side of their mouth. The Breimheinians were never able to break orbit despite their highly technological civilisation; their gravity-well was their worst enemy, but this made the Conglomerate their greatest ally. The Conglomerate helped build up the infrastructure to get the Breimheinian people into space, and the Breimheinians gladly joined their alliance as a member species. They arose to be the primary manufacturer of Conglomerate warships, building ships which were not only reliable at entering and exiting gravity-wells, but ones that could also take a punch.

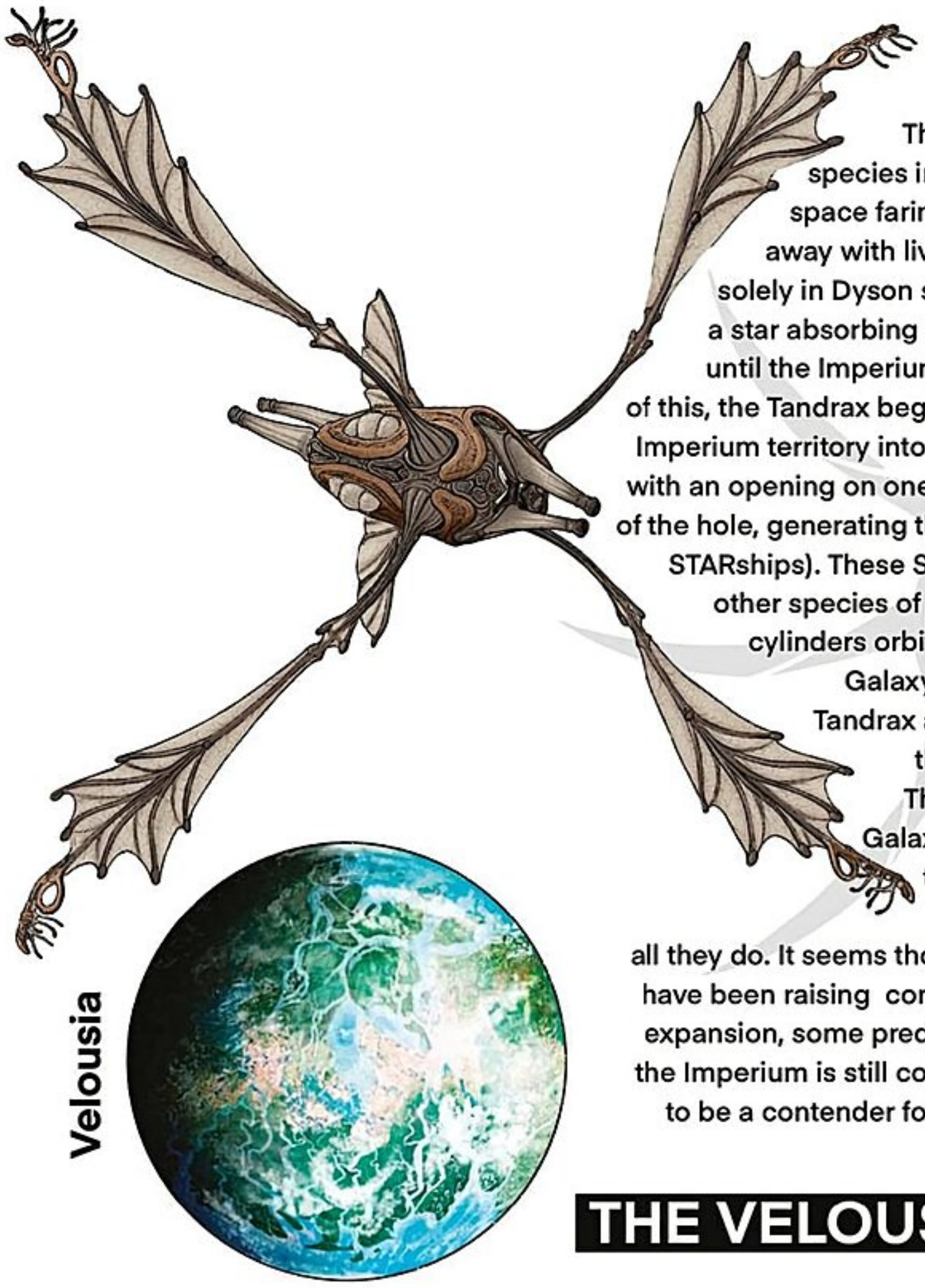


Ponyoh

THE VUREII

The Vureii are few in number after the conversion of their home planet into a womb-world by the Imperium. Their home planet was cold relative to Earth, with the only viable living space being around the equatorial regions. Most of this more temperate living space was dominated by low wetlands, like bogs, swamps and the fenlands of south eastern England. A pervasive form of fauna could be found all across this region, this planets analog of a tree. They would arch across one another, forming an elevated horizontal platform over the wetlands. The Vureii's pole-like toes allowed them to keep themselves elevated above the water level of the swamp, but they also allowed them to hang from the tall flora like sloths do on Earth.





THE TANDRAX

The Tandrax are the most technologically advanced species in the Milky Way Galaxy. Their civilisation has been space faring for such a long period of time that they've done away with living inside gravity wells all together. They now live solely in Dyson swarms (giant constellations of satellites that orbit a star absorbing all of said star's energy output). That was the case until the Imperium began their conquest of the Milky Way. Because of this, the Tandrax began turning the Dyson swarms that were nearest to Imperium territory into shkodov thrusters (essentially a sphere of mirrors with an opening on one pole). They focus and direct the star's energy out of the hole, generating thrust. The Tandrax literally fly around the galaxy in STARships). These STARships came to be known as Nomad Stars. The other species of the Orion arm began to set up stations and O'Neil cylinders orbiting these nomad stars as they passed though the Galaxy, treating them as safe havens to seek refuge. The Tandrax are generally apathetic towards the Imperium and thus far have done little to combat their expansion. They also care very little for the other species of the Galaxy, viewing themselves as above them. They allow the rabble of the Orion arm to huddle around their nomad stars to avoid extinction, but that's about all they do. It seems though that some among tandraxian high command have been raising concern regarding the exponential pace of Imperium expansion, some predicting that if they do not act decisively soon while the Imperium is still comparatively small, then the Imperium could prove to be a contender for the Tandrax's spot as hegemon in the Milky Way.

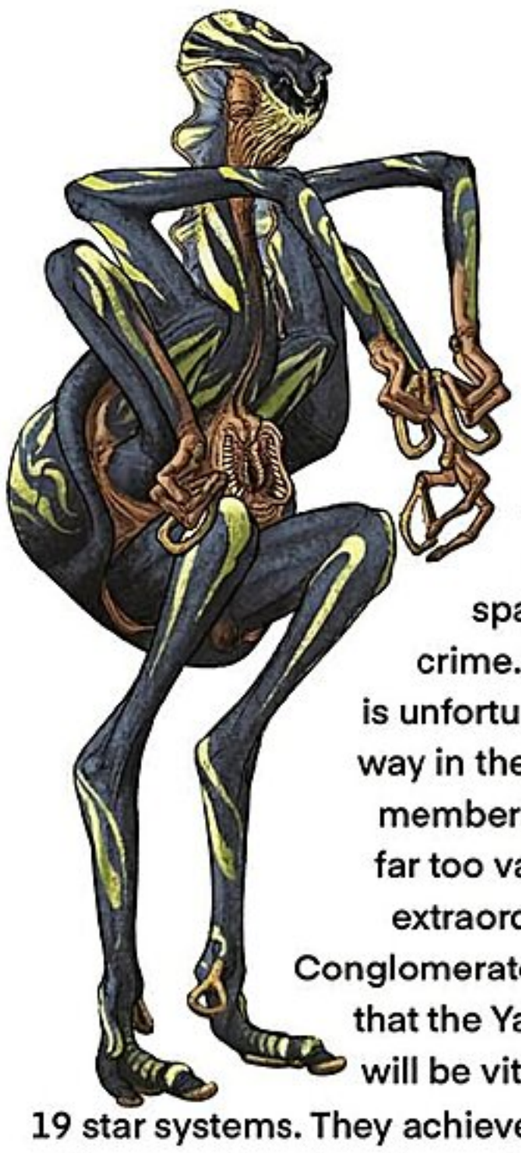
Velousia

THE VELOUSIAN BLADE DANCERS

There is a somewhat Nietzechian flavour to the Velousian way of life. Their culture is one of aristocratic dominance and a chivalrous honour system of might makes right, which is not something you'd expect upon your first glance looking at them due to their gelatinous upper body. But it is precisely because of their physiology that they developed such a competitive strain in their culture. A Velousian exhibits extreme dexterity with their two frontal tentacles, which far exceeds the capability of any Human. This is made possible by their 3 brains; 2 of which are dedicated entirely to their corresponding arm. Through these tentacles they also feed, using smaller retractable and extendable tentacles that have small mouths on their tips.

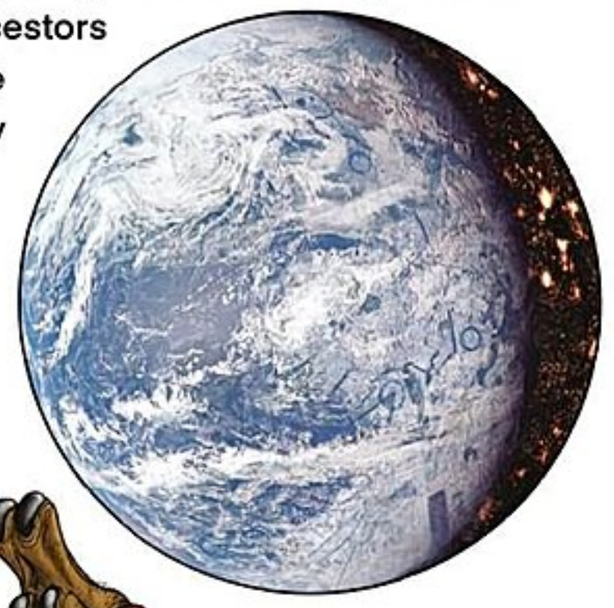
Their lower body is unique in that they can swivel on it a full 360 degrees. This allows them to move in any direction they see fit with great speed, without having to turn their head.

Now back to their civilisation; their culture is a bloodthirsty one, in which they go by resolving almost any major dispute through trial by combat, in particular combat by way of the blade. Every Velousian carries two weapons that resemble machetes with which they defend their honour throughout their lives. The craftsmanship of their blades will often signify wealth and class. Those in the upper stratum of Velousian society carry extremely decorated blades that are often centuries and even millennia old. The use of such blades is reserved purely for ceremonial practices. These blades are commonly passed down from generation to generation, bearing their families' crest, whereas the poor lower classes often equip themselves with more practical blades in order to climb the social hierarchy, with the aim of putting some recognition on their family name. There are of course many different cultures within their species, but this tradition is common between almost all of them, albeit with a different aesthetic value and customs between each of the Velousian races. In the dominant Velousian religion, it is believed to be better for a Velousian to die in combat, preferably when they are in their youth. It is considered pious to bless the afterlife with beautiful dead and disgraceful to sully it with grey elders, unless that elder has reached their ancient age by struggling against great adversity and many trials by the blade.



THE YARKEEN

The Yarkeen are perhaps the only species that thrives in the chaos created by Imperium expansion. The disorder caused by the War allows Yarkeenian pirates to raid and rule over lesser protected Conglomerate outposts. Yarkeen are very rarely seen without heavy cybernetic enhancements. Modification among the species is common to become more effective assassins and mercenaries. Dispite the Yarkeen only making up a minority within Conglomerate shared-spaces, they over-index in both syndicated and non-organised crime. They have a reputation for being violent trouble makers, which is unfortunate for those well-to-do Yarkeen who are just trying to make their way in the world. In spite of this fact, the Conglomerate will not remove their membership status. The resources that Yarkeenian systems offer them are far too valuable to be relinquished in this time of war. The Yarkeen have an extraordinarily high birth-rate compared to other member species of the Conglomerate, as well as a relatively low gestation period. The Conglomerate know that the Yarkeen represent the bulk of future population growth and that they will be vital as a labour force. The Yarkeen once had a vast empire spanning 19 star systems. They achieved such a height of civilisation through the mastery of Flux gates; gateways connecting our universe to the Flux. These Flux gates could transport matter and information from one side of the galaxy to the other in a near instant, taking advantage of the strange laws of physics that govern the Flux-verse. Of course, their empire eventually fell, as all empires do, leaving the colonies of this once great power to plummet into destitution. The true reason for this collapse is now lost to the mists of time. Historians speculate that the decline of their empire could have been brought on by an immense struggle against an artificial intelligence of the own creation. A struggle that the Yarkeen ultimately won, but the high price they paid for such a victory was the unity of their empire. The theory being that the A.I. was so integral to the functioning of their stellar domain that once they defeated it, their empire was spread too thinly to be held together any longer. The Yarkeen never recovered from this collapse and were plunged into a dark age without end. This was a time of technological regression, where the machines built by their ancestors Came to be viewed as the instruments of the Gods. When the Conglomerate first came across the disjointed systems of the Yarkeen, the ruins of the ancient Flux gates quickly became the focus of their interests. Through reverse engineering, the Ounegg scientists created the Flux drive, but the knowledge of how to navigate the Flux safely was ultimately lost.



Caroom

THE OUNEGG

The Ouneggians are a mercantile race of bankers, economists, scientists and traders. They the smallest sentient species in the Galaxy (the tallest of them only reaching a Human's knee) and they often seek protection by forming close relations to other species through trade. They have thoroughly integrated themselves into the Conglomerate and now practically run the entire alliance's economy. What they lack in brawn they more than make up for with brains; the Ounegg are renowned inventors, the most notable of their inventions is the Flux drive. Now Flux drives are the primary power source used by the Conglomerate. A Flux drive uses exotic matter as fuel. This exotic matter originates from an alternative universe called the Flux. When this matter is brought into our plane of existence, it becomes extremely unstable, duplicating itself inexplicably. These duplicates can be burnt off as an endless supply of fuel if stabilised within a Flux drive, so long as a core of Flux particles remain. A Flux drive can yield massive amounts of energy, powering anything from a city to the engines of a starship, depending on the size of the drive.

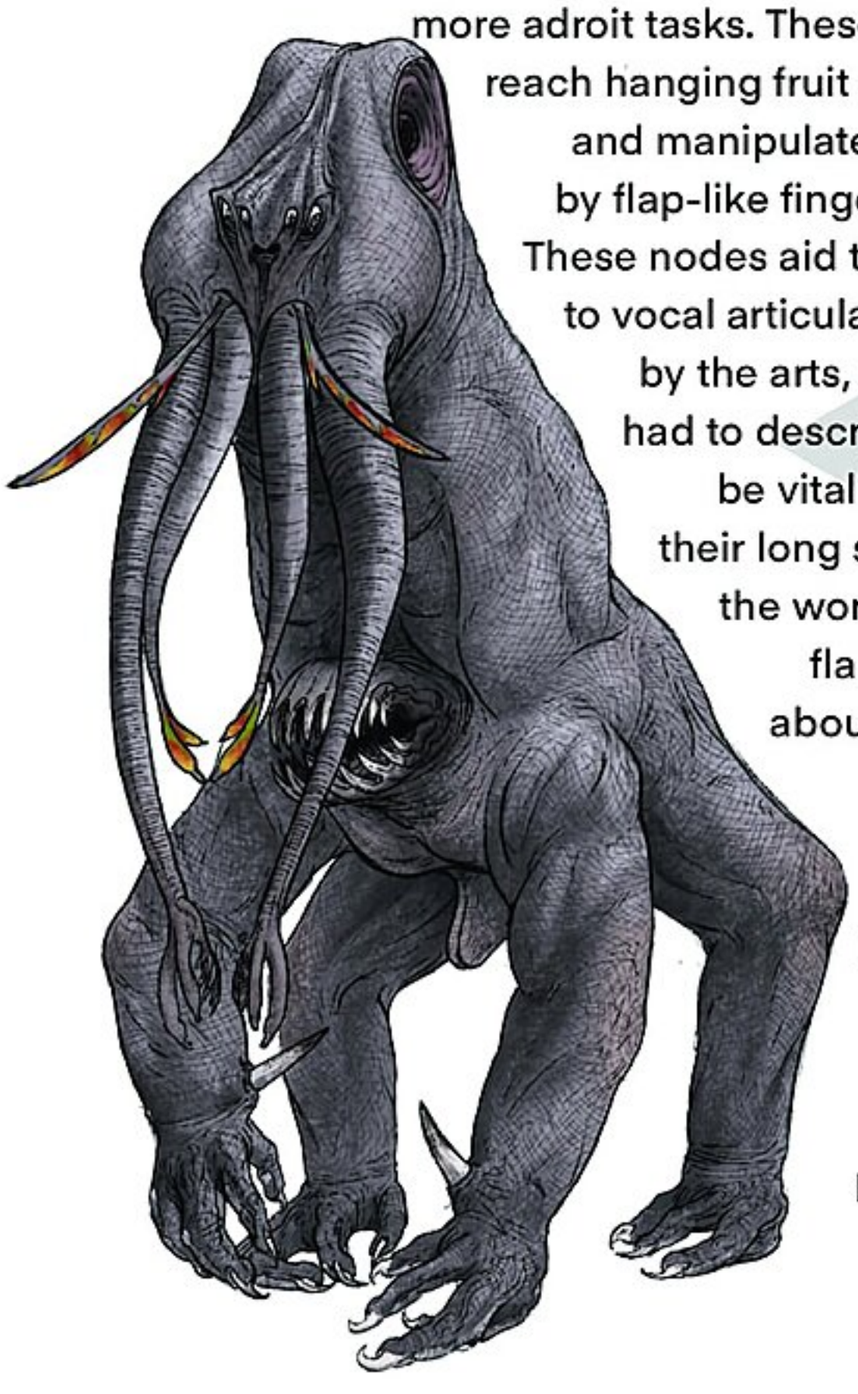
The Ouneggians have two sets of eyes. The top set are for long distance and the lower are for close up dexterous tasks. Their hind legs have fused to form a single powerful leg. Their most prized asset, their brain, is stored not in their head, but in their hunched back. They have the greatest Encephalization quotient of any known species.

THE GORD

The Gord are not one species, but two, the product of perfect symbiosis between two species resulting in a single sentient hive-like entity. The central plant-like core of a Gord works as a hive for the smaller drones, which live, breed and die in and around the Gord. It provides sustenance and guidance though complicated pings of information, which the drones are perfectly adapted to understand, serve and reply. The drones act as the eyes and hands of the Gordian central structure, they ping visual information back to the Gord to provide situational awareness, and also allow the Gord to manipulate objects around them. Through these means the Gord developed their highly advanced Civilisation. Due to the extremely exotic nature of the Gord, their language and culture is practically indecipherable to the other species of the Galaxy. This makes sharing technology and complex information very difficult, and unfortunately led to several wars between them and the Conglomerate. Despite this turbulent past, the Gord are a powerful ally in the fight against the Imperium.

THE KOLAXANS

Their muscular and squat physique is due to the high gravity on their home planet, Romonia. Their heavy-set limbs are occupied at all times by supporting their hulking mass, but they have evolved powerful trunk-like appendages on their head to deal with more adroit tasks. These dexterous trunks which originally served to reach hanging fruit and leaves, enabled the Kolaxans to develop and manipulate tools. The tips of their trunks are terminated by flap-like fingers that are lined with bioluminescent nodes. These nodes aid the Kolaxans with communication in addition to vocal articulation. They are a passionate people, besotted by the arts, music, poetry, sex and most of all, war. If one had to describe Kolaxan civilisation in one word, it would be vitalism! They are a life-affirming folk that honour their long standing traditions in such a way that it is not the worship of the ashes, but the preservation of the flame! Their empire is martial and unapologetic about its existence, which allowed them to rise to be a prominent industrial and military power on the Orion spur. They even managed to resist annexation by the Conglomerate by fighting a long and bloody war, remaining a completely autonomous empire. The Conglomerate lost so poorly that they even made concessions to the ferocious Kolaxans. Now the two neighbouring powers are trading allies, but the memory of that war remains.

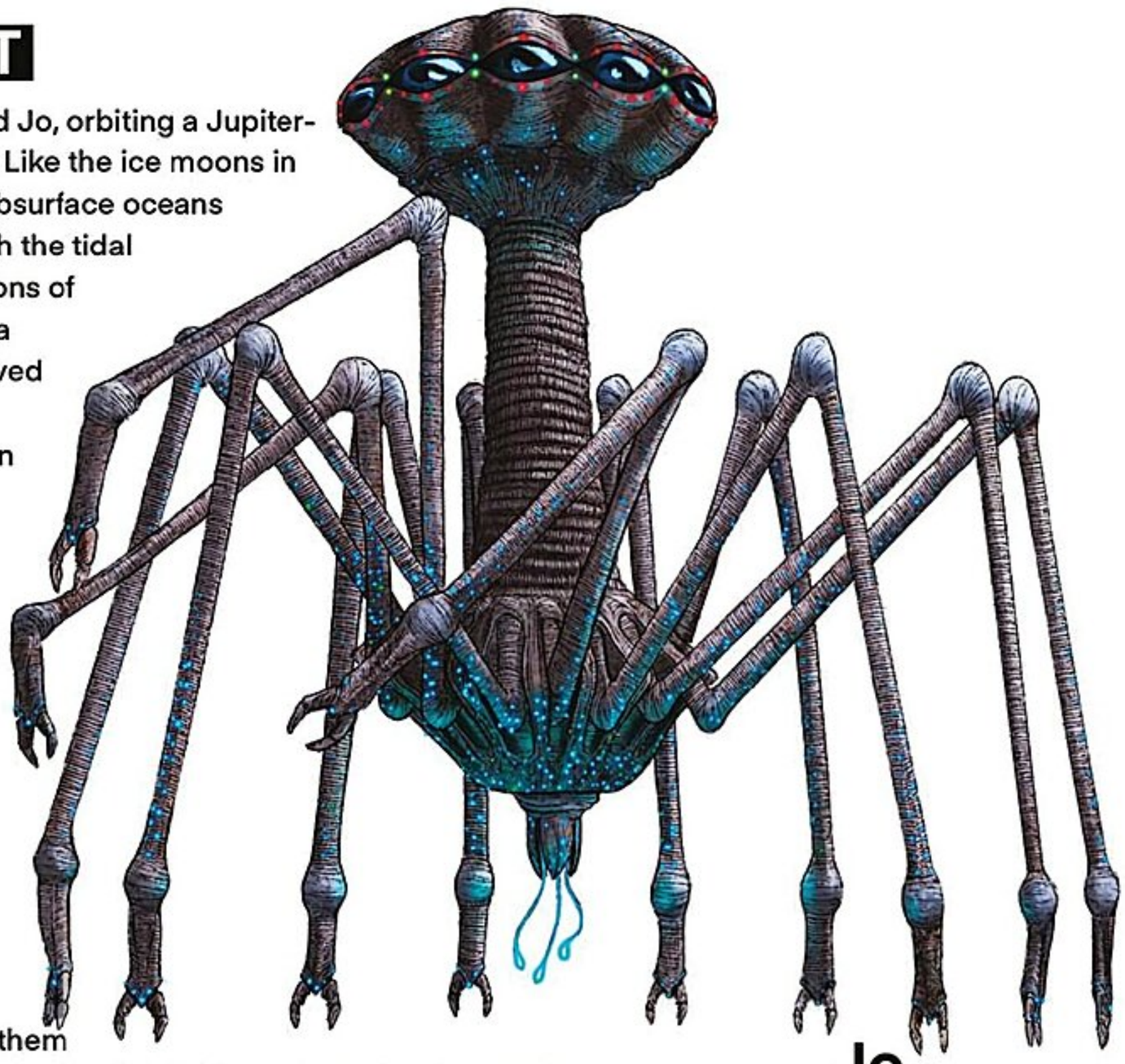


Dugburrah

Romonia

THE PEKT

The Pekt originate from an icy moon named Jo, orbiting a Jupiter-like gas giant named simply "the Old One". Like the ice moons in our own system, Jo has an icy shell and subsurface oceans with a warm core that is kept active through the tidal forces exerted by the Old One. The conditions of these oceans resemble that of the deep sea here on Earth, so lifeforms on Jo have evolved advanced bioluminescence. Vast glowing forests of strange flora cover the sea bed on Jo. The Pekt use bioluminescence in a similar way to how Humans use facial expression. Unlike Humans, and all other sentient life in the galaxy for that matter, the Pekt exibxit radial symmetry. Their saucer-like head can orientate to any direction, and all of their limbs double as legs and arms. The Pekt had somewhat a head start to becoming a spacefaring civilisation; with their home world having low gravity, meant getting off-world was no hardship. With there being so many other ice moons around the Old One, it meant plenty of other habitable worlds for them to spread to early in their development. Throughout Pekt history there has been an obsession with the world beyond the ice. There were many early expeditions into the surface world, where the Pekt donned armoured pressurised suits resembling that of old diving suits here on Earth, their ships almost holding a steampunk aesthetic to them. The Pekt were the first species to be absorbed into Conglomerate by the Soeus, which at that time was known as the Soeus empire.

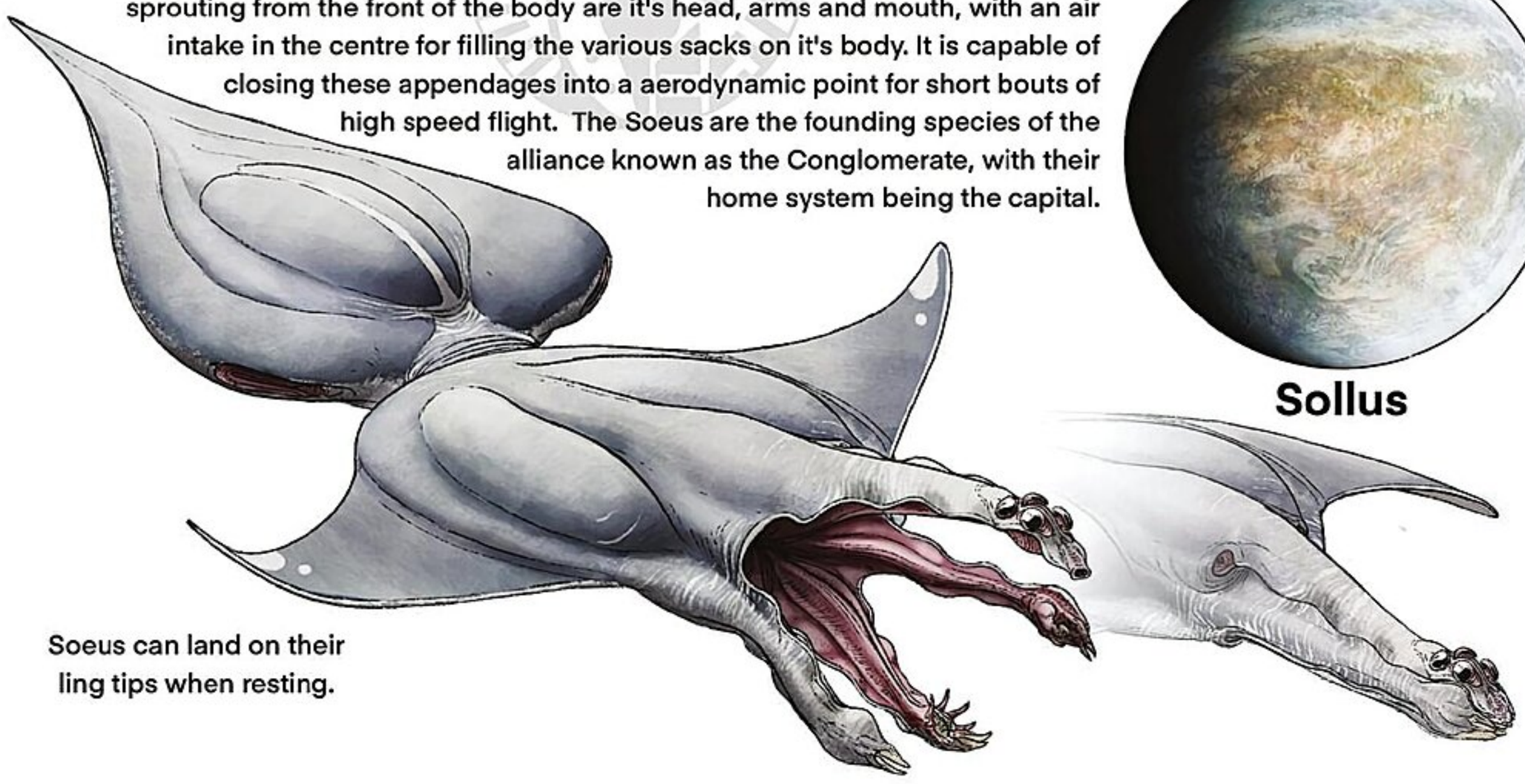


Jo

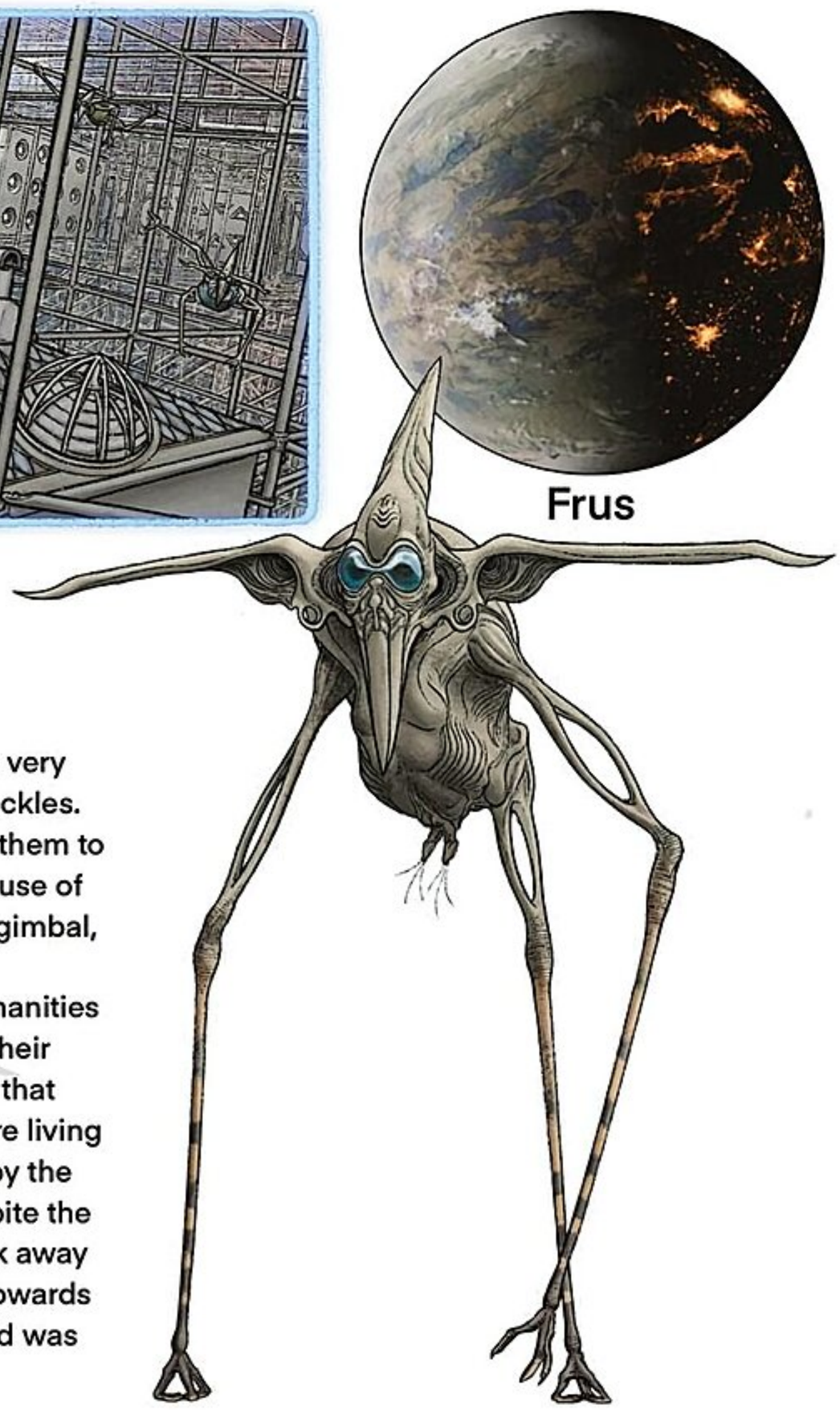
Sollus

THE SOEUS

The Soeus hail from the planet Sollus; a low gravity world with an abnormally large and dense atmosphere. It's able to retain this atmosphere due to the great distance between itself and it's host star. The Soeus are perfectly suited to moving around in this strange environment, with a system of three large sacks that, though an internal chemical process, combust and feed into biological air jets located in the abdomen. These jets are capable of firing prograde and even retrograde. The four appendages sprouting from the front of the body are it's head, arms and mouth, with an air intake in the centre for filling the various sacks on it's body. It is capable of closing these appendages into a aerodynamic point for short bouts of high speed flight. The Soeus are the founding species of the alliance known as the Conglomerate, with their home system being the capital.



Soeus can land on their ling tips when resting.

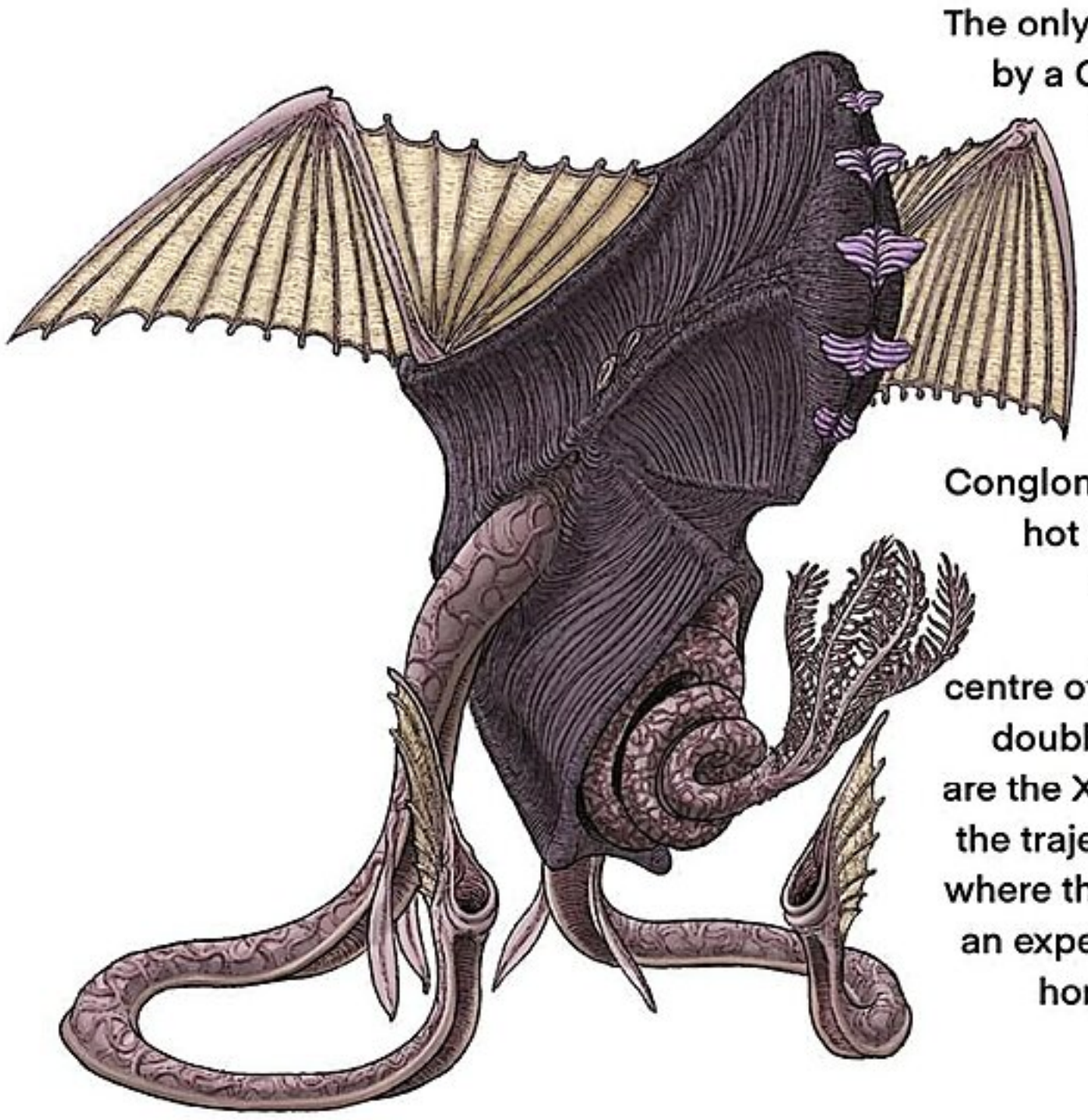


THE BO

The Bo are a race of arboreal tripods, however they are very capable of terrestrial movement by walking on their knuckles. Their strange head acts as a brilliant gyroscope, allowing them to balance on one arm, freeing up their two other arms for use of tools. They can also rotate their head 270 degrees, like a gimbal, as they swing about their environment.

The Bo had achieved a civilisation resembling that of humanities before the activation of the All-Mother; that was until their destruction by the hands of the Imperium. The few Bo that remain were found drifting in an out of fuel ship. They were living in terrible conditions and were granted refugee status by the Conglomerate. They are now critically endangered. Despite the Conglomerate's best efforts, Yarkeen trophy hunters pick away at their dwindling population, driving the Bo ever more towards extinction. After the Imperium invasion, their home world was converted into just another Womb-World.

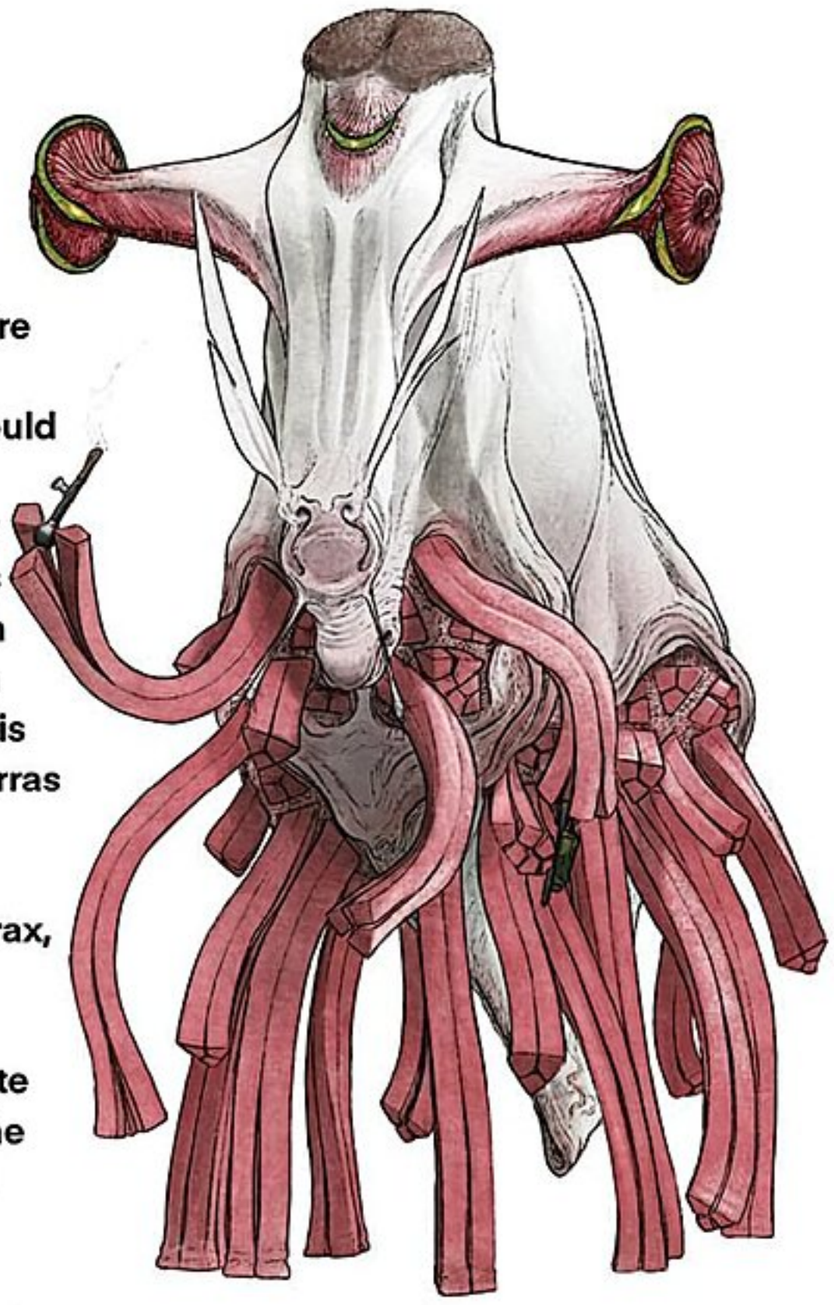
THE XEPOURI



The only proof of the Xepouri ever having existed was discovered by a Conglomerate probe. This evidence came in the form of a derelict generation ship. The occupants were long dead; something had gone horribly wrong, as is the case with many generation ships. Conglomerate exobiologists pored over the data, discovering how their biology worked and where they had come from, but much was lost to time. It is commonly believed that the Xepouri were incapable of flapping their wings to achieve flight. Conglomerate scientists speculate that they would have pumped hot air out of their two long leg-like tentacles, and would use their wings as more of a sail of sorts. They are thought to have slithered on these limbs for short distances. In the centre of their torso is a coiled appendage that is thought to have doubled as a manipulator and a mouth. Above this appendage are the Xepouri's flap-like eyes. From studying the data regarding the trajectory of their ship on the flight computers, they deduced where the Xepouri's ship had come from. The Conglomerate sent an expedition to make first contact, but it was revealed that their home world had been converted into just another Imperium Womb World.

THE GHERRA

The Gherra are a peace loving people. Their territory sits on the outer periphery of Gordian space, providing them natural protection from the Imperium. The Gord and the Gherra have a strange relationship, mostly because they do not understand one another as a species, being that they're just so radically different in almost all aspects. They co-exist well enough, mind you. The Gherra know that if the Gord were their enemy then they would have crushed them by now, given the greater size of the Gordian empire.
The Gherra are quite an un-aspirational species, and they spend all of their time either intoxicated or asleep. They weren't always this way though, this fate befell them after their encounter with their neighbours, the Gord. As an offering of peace between their two species, the Gord offered the Gherra a plant that grows on their home world, Dugburrah. It just so happens that this plant is an extremely potent Psychoactive drug when injested into the Gherras system. It has other affects over the Gherras physiology though, the plant activates their latent psionic potential. The psionic ability that the Gherra possesses is no where near the level of the Over-Fathers, or even the Tandrax, but it is there nonetheless. From then on, the Gherra quit with outwards expansion and focused more on inward exploration, pontification and philosophising. Some theorise that the Gord did this on purpose to eliminate their expansionistic neighbours, as the Gord have benefited greatly from the situation given that a significant amount of trade between the two species includes this plant.
This gave rise to the popular pejorative term "Lazy Gherra", which is used across the Conglomerate to shame individuals who are too highfalutin to pull their own weight.



Gherria

THE CHANTAURI

Chantauri culture is extremely collectivist in nature. For example, until the advent of Human arrival of Chiron, the notion of "I" or "self" did not really exist. Chantauri were notably incapable of referring to other individuals in the past tense. To us this seems extremely alien; how could one survive in such a state, let alone develop technology, no matter how rudimentary? This is perhaps a testament to how they were never able to organise in a similar way to humanity as a species. Early Human scientists theorised that this state of consciousness may have arisen from their hermaphroditic nature. Chantauri do not have sexes, they reproduce when a one of them produces an incubation sack. This sack is connected to a Chantauri externally via an umbilical cord of sorts. Members of the community protect the incubation sack and take turns inseminating it. Neither Chantauri knows which child is theirs, so the new generation are raised by the community. Members of the community take turns incubating new younglings when they come of age. Chantauri very rarely live in any settlement larger than a small village or tribe. Newg is practically a metropolis by Chantauri standards.
When Chantauri do manage to organise into a city or a large town, they're whipped up into a sort of community mind, reacting to the symphony of pheromones produced by the collective, rather like ants. When there's a large enough group of them, the individual is subsumed into the mass to fulfil tasks that need to be performed. With that being said, the personality does not vanish entirely in such environments. They can still get into disputes with other Chantauri, feel happy or sad by certain outcomes, and even become violent enough to kill one another.
They're quite alien in that respect, but rather human in other regards. Coming into contact with other sentient species who have this concept of names and identity was a radical change for the modus operandi of the Chantauri mind. Maybe it was a similar revelatory moment to humanity's theorised transfer from the Bicameral mind to the individual mind. I'm not saying that the Chantauri exist or existed in a state of Bicameralism, just that the jump between states would be of a similar magnitude, a major change to their state of consciousness.
The Chantauri react to the world on a moment to moment basis, with little or no capacity to delay gratification. They also notably have low impulse control when compared to humans, leading to many an altercation between Chantauri and human settlers. They're more bound to their instincts than we are, that much is true. With all of that said, we still do not understand our own consciousness, so how could we ever hope to understand an alien mind?

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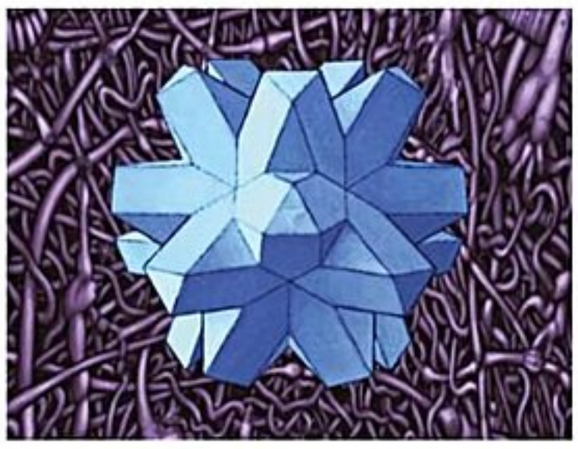

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SEVERAL OF JOHNATHAN BARKLEY'S NEIGHBORS CLAIMED THAT AT EXACTLY 7:15 P.M. THEY HEARD A TERRIBLE SCREAM EMENATING FROM BARKLEY'S LIBRARY, BUT, OFCOURSE, THEY HAD NO WAY OF KNOWING WHO HAD SCREAMED OR WHAT HAD CAUSED THE FRIGHTFUL OUTCRY.
HELLO, HOWARD!
JOHNATHAN! NO! NO! AAAAGH!
THE END
...NOW ALL IS PEACEFUL IN SPRINGFIELD... FOR THERE IS NO MORE GOSSIP.. THEY HAVE LEARNED THAT THOU SHALT... HEAR NO EVIL... SEE NO EVIL... SPEAK NO EVIL!
The End

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